

# WESTERN ART AND THE NEW ERA

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An Introduction To Modern Art  
*By* KATHERINE S. DREIER



BRENTANO'S


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NEW YORK

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*Western Art  
and the New Era*

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*Katherine S. Dreier*

*Books by the same Author*

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PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF  
VINCENT VAN GOGH

BY

ELIZABETH DU QUESNE VAN GOGH

TRANSLATED BY

KATHERINE S. DREIER

With a Critical Essay by the Translator

1913

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FIVE MONTHS IN THE ARGENTINE

(From a Woman's Point of View)

1918 to 1919

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WESTERN ART AND THE NEW ERA

(An Introduction to Modern Art)

1923





COMPOSITION No. 234, 1921

KANDINSKY

*Frontispiece*



# *Western Art and the New Era*

*An Introduction  
To Modern Art*

By  
*Katherine S. Dreier*



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*To Dee*

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED  
IN RECOGNITION OF THE GENEROSITY OF HIS SPIRIT  
AND  
HIS INSPIRATION TO MODERN ARTISTS



## FOREWORD

GREAT confusion seems to exist in the average mind as to what constitutes Modern Art. In spite of the fact that the modern expression of art has now been amongst us for almost two decades, the average public finds it difficult to see any connection between it and what they consider art. The Société Anonyme Inc. (Museum of Modern Art) in New York, which was founded to promote the serious expression of the serious study of serious men in the art world of today, became very conscious of this confusion. I was therefore asked to give a series of lectures to help the public to a clearer understanding. Many requests have come to me to repeat them, not only in America but in the Orient as well. It seemed, therefore, advisable to rearrange them in book form, to reach a larger public. If I can help anyone to a clearer understanding of what art is, to have them realize that it has nothing to do with personal taste, is not alone the mastery of technique or a repetition of the art of the past, but that art to be alive must be creative, then my hours of labor will not have been in vain. My desire is to make the present generation realize that art is not dead, can never die while man is, but is constantly in the making.

KATHERINE DREIER

*President of the Société Anonyme, Inc.*

New York, 1922.



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*Western Art  
and the New Era*



# *Western Art and the New Era*

## I

### WHY DOES ART EXIST?

**T**O have a comprehension of art and its meaning, to understand the various phases of art as they appear to us today, one must have some knowledge of how art came into existence. This can only be accomplished through the study of the art of primitive races, whence one can trace the fundamental reason for the existence of art, can reach the source of inspiration, and push aside all those accessories which have accumulated like barnacles throughout the ages, until they have made secondary matters of supreme importance. Only by comprehending the fundamental necessities of life can man conquer the illusionary caprice which life outwardly shows.

The study, therefore, of the development of the art of a primitive people is of the utmost importance. It is this phase of life which shows the inward need of man to express himself through art, for out of the multiplicity of illusions, man, through poise and clearness of vision, strives to reach an understanding and a knowledge of spiritual laws, which bind together those inner experiences that make for development. Nowhere does one find this perceptible seeking of a people towards spiritual laws so clearly brought forth as in their arts.

Hence the question as to the origin of art is important. This origin is not so simple to prove if one seeks for it in some definite tribe, at some definite period, which had a definite beginning in the past, for art exists in man. Art

is therefore constantly in the making. Since art is constantly in the making, there can be no development in art, only a growth and development pertaining to the rendering of some definite idea or expression in art. One can find the origin of art today among the primitive races that are still amongst us, or trace it back through ancient civilization, from specimens that have been excavated. It is because we forget both the spiritual and physical laws to which man is subject, which cause the desire for the creation of art, forget that because of this, art is constantly in the making, that many of us today have such false and conventional ideas with regard to art. Since the desire for art exists in man, art is constantly being created anew and does not come from any one group of people, but is universal. It is therefore as fluid and possible of change as the development of any other force existing in man. It is not from our standpoint a state of development reached by man, but a developing force within man, to which he must at all times respond. One thing alone can be positively proven: that at all times and among all people there exists a curious accord as to the desire towards art. It was, in fact, and has remained, the first universal speech of man. Originally from signs made by primitive man, both art and the written language developed, and even today it is almost universally understood and does not present the barrier which the written or spoken language does. It overcomes the obstacles which words present, which makes it less material.

Primitive man felt the need to give expression through art to his divine instincts as well as to his physical needs. In the most primitive races one finds as a first expression of the spiritual side of man, an overpowering shaft, as their idea of the Unknown, and later, from out of this shaft was constructed a deity in the shape of man. This we find in all races. We can see, therefore, why it is wise to go back to the starting point, for we are apt to forget the hidden meaning, the fundamental spiritual law from which these



symbols drew their life. But not alone do we find symbols as expression of their spiritual needs but united to their physical needs as well, when to their primitive tools were soon added those first designs which were to please the fancy and stimulate the energies. It is this side of art which we have almost completely lost sight of since the introduction of machinery. The more a people become civilized according to our modern idea of machine civilization, the sharper is the line drawn between meeting the actual necessities of life, and uniting it with that conscious creation which stimulates the imagination, pleases the fancy, and releases the energy of man, which in primitive times was always woven so intimately into the working utensils of daily life. The amount of energy that is lost to the world today through our tolerance of ugliness, we will rediscover, when we have mastered the psychic and spiritual laws the primitive people followed and obeyed instinctively. For when I speak of ugliness I do not refer to personal taste which varies not alone in all races and people and at different periods as well, but to the disobedience of the fundamental laws of balance, and the beauty of line. It is this ugliness which we have let creep into our daily lives, which is the beginning of decay and which has blinded many to the beauty which exists in our midst. It has made us unconscious of the spiritual force which true art always calls into play in daily life. We have fallen into the error of separating man's spiritual and physical needs. We have divorced art from life, until we have arrived at a conscious mental attitude of considering art not an innate necessity of life, but a luxury easily to be dispensed with. Art would never have come into existence if it had not been to meet a decided need in man. And it is in the arts that we meet one of the fundamental differences which separates man from the animals.

Fontanelle speaking of science states that: "Most animals as for instance spiders, bees and beavers, have a kind of

art peculiar to themselves, but each race of animals has no more than one art, and this one has no first inventor among the race. Man on the other hand, has an infinity of different arts, which were not born with his race, and of which the glory was his own." And though the individual expression of the different arts is not born in man, as the desire to give expression is, the power to give such expression varies with each individual, a point we are apt to forget and which also is one of the fundamental differences between the desire for art in man, and the arts of the animals, where the power of expression is equally distributed among each animal of each special race.

This power in man of creating different arts, belonging peculiarly to man, the power to put or fit things together, as the Latin root for art AR shows, brought about the arts of cooking, spinning, pottery-making, husbandry and so forth. In fact, this inventiveness as it expressed itself to meet man's various needs brought into existence the so-called major and minor arts. It is interesting to note in the study of the development of the human race, why some arts at different periods were called major and others minor. In societies where slaves were employed to prepare food, shelter, clothing, and so forth, these arts were grouped as servile arts; while the arts of husbandry, or agriculture under the Roman Republic being exercised by free men, were considered honorable. This in turn was looked down upon as servile during the Middle Ages, when under the feudal system it was exercised by the serf. So we find a constant changing as to what constitutes major or minor arts. However today in general we simply class as belonging to the major arts, sculpture, painting, architecture, music, dancing and the dramatic arts, though we can consider only the art of painting in this brief essay on so vast a subject.

It is well for us to clearly remember that this arbitrary mental attitude of classing the arts into major and minor arts may be very misleading. Art proceeding from the



creative forces of life cannot be termed a minor art, if the creative act goes into the putting or fitting of things together. It belongs to the major arts, if created; for creation of necessity includes the highest form of mental activity. Therefore, whenever the creative force is felt or seen, it should receive its due, whether the expression takes the form of a new bridge, a railroad construction or is to be seen in marble, bronze or paint. One reason why art has lost its flavor, is because so many copyists have misled the people by their purposeless art. For art, when art, is always essential and meets some distinctive need in man. If this is realized, one can understand the danger which confronts one, when there is an arbitrary separation of the arts without taking into account the creative force that found expression in a given object. For if one stops to discriminate one can readily see how replicas can be made of the so-called fine arts, or if not absolute replicas, copies with so little individual creation, that it amounts to the same thing. The reason why the arts were divided at the time of the Renaissance into major and minor arts, was that on the whole there was more copying done among the minor arts of cooking, spinning, weaving and so forth, than among the so-called fine arts of painting and sculpture. I wonder whether one can say the same of the fine arts in the West today!

In China, in spite of the strong influence of tradition which almost completely blinds the Western eye to the new essence to be found in the works of various painters, a painting is never claimed to be an original if the technique, art or skill of a past master is employed or copied, even when the subject chosen has never been selected by the masters whose technique is followed. This discrimination and honesty unfortunately cannot be claimed for the self-styled Western artists, who often copy the technique or even the composition of an old master. No such confusion seems to exist in China, where a person of culture is sup-

posed to know his history of art and therefore can recognize the technique used. In this they are more closely related to the 'seeing eye' of the primitive people than we of today of the West, for in a community where everyone can more or less produce art, the whole community have developed a 'seeing eye,' which can readily detect the greater skill or the finer interpretation. Even an artist of renown in China will always state when he has painted a picture in the style or manner of some other man. And the great respect that we must feel for Chinese art lies chiefly in this clear vision of respecting the individuality of a painter and of the recognized function of art, which is to free the spirit of the beholder and to invigorate and enlarge his vision. This must always be true when one places art where it belongs as a developing force within man.

## II

### THE IMPORTANCE OF IMAGINATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SENSES

**A**LMOST all modern educators have become very conscious of the danger modern life presents of losing the health-giving power of amusing oneself through the imagination, that play-impulse which when directed towards one's work becomes the greatest driving force in life, for it frees the imagination which stimulates one's energies and turns one's labor into pleasure. In fact, the Froebel System, on which almost all kindergarten schools are based, is an attempt to reawaken this starved imagination, which was so alive and today still is, in all primitive people. It is the losing of our imaginative qualities which we have in mind when we say that 'we live in a material world.' We and our children have become so material that we can only visualize what is before us. The obvious instead of the illusive claims our greatest admiration.

The modern child rarely knows how to play with his own imagination, and out of nothing create his own amusements. He is buried among his toys. He must have the concrete thing before him, the diminutive of the reality — the diminutive playhouse, the diminutive typewriter, the diminutive railroad, and so forth. The grown person must have the material expression of his desire. They both have lost the road to dreams and fairyland, to the world of imagination. To enjoy, they must possess, not knowing that possession stifles rather than frees the individual.

Some of us who are becoming conscious of this are trying to find again that lost road which the primitive

people knew so well. For the natural early primitive impulses of which we have already spoken, of uniting art with our needs, whether material or spiritual, brought into play fancy, and stimulated the imagination. Dr. Yrjö Hirn<sup>1</sup> of Helsingfors feels that the origin of art in primitive man was due less to the individual and solitary impulse than to the desire of sharing and communicating pleasure as well as lessening pain. He also states: "Artists are those members of society who are so constituted as to feel more acutely than the rest, certain classes of pleasure which all cannot feel in this degree. By the fact of their constitution they are impelled to devote their active powers to the production of such pleasures, to the making or doing of some of these things which they enjoy so keenly when they are made and done by others. At the same time, the artist does not, by assuming these ministries, surrender his enjoying or receptive functions."

In considering the word 'pleasure,' we must think of it as proceeding from God or good, not from the devil or evil, as many of the Puritans did. It is this antecedence which has increased our confusion in conjunction with art, in whatever country it is to be found. Art proceeds from feeling, which has its function in the soul, the body of feeling. The soul which receives its impulses both from spirit or earth may accept or reject either source. The Puritans, whether the followers of Savonarola in Italy, or Calvin in England, wished to reject those impulses proceeding from earth or the lower forces, but through their lack of discrimination struck at all feeling. In the swing of the pendulum which we are meeting today, we find the same confusion, and are suffering as much from this other false conception of embracing all feeling as the Puritans suffered through rejection. Unfortunately, the average man today is absolutely bewildered when it comes to feeling as pertaining to the senses, whether it be the sense

<sup>1</sup> "The Origin of Art" by Dr. Yrjö Hirn, of the University of Finland.



of touch, taste, sight, hearing or smell. As regards their finer development, it appears all an unknown world to him. That these senses were given man to be developed to their highest capacity, to become a clear channel for the completion of the individual, seems either strange, foolish or dangerous, according to temperament or training. So great is this confusion towards the senses, that many people today, believing the Puritans to be wrong, swing back to embracing all feeling as the Puritans rejected them all, instead of in their turn discriminating between the higher and lower impulses which reach man through the senses. This lack of discrimination causes a false attitude towards the senses, and has been one of the greatest handicaps art has had to encounter for some time. Since art is an expression of feeling which cannot be expressed in words, the question arises whether pictures of satire, so prevalent once more in modern European art today, which mock the foibles of the age, really do belong to the realm of art. People who attempt to understand art through the mind instead of through the sense of sight, would give these pictures their place in art, but the highest art is an expression of the finest and deepest feelings, which only in the rarest instances can be expressed in words. These feelings therefore find expression through the arts, and are received through the senses. If we leave our senses crude, they cannot respond to these higher vibrations of feeling. Then the very essence of life is lost. It is therefore of the greatest importance that we should develop our senses to their highest capacity, realizing that they are the true guardians of the development of our soul, for it depends upon their state of development as to the feelings which control us.

Civilization, which is the development of the finer essence in man, born of imagination and the developed senses, seems to come in waves. When man loses sight of the importance of the spirit or finer essence and concentrates

entirely on outward forms, there appears the downward sweep of the wave, to carry away as it breaks, those semblances of a seeming civilization which caused man to lose his vision. So it is that much of value is swept away with it, because man could not place it in its proper relationship to the spirit of life. A good example of this is the drainage system which Evans unearthed at Cnossus in 1900. Cnossus, on the Island of Crete, was destroyed about 2000 B.C. It had reached a high state of outward civilization, for after its destruction, man had to wait almost four thousand years, or till the 19th Century, before he once more evolved out of his mind and brains this high point of development in the art of drainage. For if we apply the definition of the Latin root AR of the word art, to put or fit things together, which brought about the art of weaving and so forth, plumbing and drainage belong to the arts. It is only when we lose sight of the creative forces constantly active in life, and worship the things it once created, that we die. That is our danger today. We are once more worshipping outward forms — forgetting that it is the Spirit which we must worship, and which constantly creates anew, and that the only thing of real value is Spirit — Spirit which animates man, which existed yesterday, exists today, and will continue on tomorrow.

This Spirit which is constantly active in the life of man, creating the essence and developing the senses, is changing the forces that influence man, making them less and less physical. Whereas formerly division and diversity of character were brought about in the individual by belonging definitely to some nation, there is today a greater diversity among various groups of thinking people than any physical or national boundary introduces. In other words, the physical boundary, which influenced the early tribes and nations, seems to be vanishing and to be replaced by the power of thought. It is amazing to find how

thought is moulding people the world over into groups, regardless of their physical surroundings or the nation to which they belong. It is thought; and though thought can be as misleading as anything else material, it is not as concretely material as mountains and rivers.

For example, take those who believe in Capitalism, those who believe in Socialism, or those who believe in Communism. All of these people, regardless of where they live, produce much more the same result as influenced by their thought, than by the individual nations of which they are a part. They show the national influence on their character, but it is less a moulding force than the thoughts under which they live. It is the same with the artists, whether creators or imitators, belonging to the old or the modern schools; it is their mental attitude towards their art rather than their nationality which leaves its deepest mark on their work and character. It is this which shows our progress the ages down. It is something less tangible which is exercising the greater influence and power today.

One need only to study the development of the human race, to meet with the most extraordinary examples of the influence of nature on early civilization. Take for instance the development of the Egyptian under the influence of the Nile. When one studies the history of Egypt, one can readily understand why the Nile was sacred to the Egyptians, for its influence for development was marvelous. Not only did the Nile make Egypt fertile, through its annual rise, but it forced the people to think. It forced them to build dikes and canals. The constantly recurring floods forced them to a scientific study of the causes and led them to the science of astronomy, through which science they mastered the evils those floods caused. One can see therefore why astronomy and astrology, the study of the influence of the stars on man, were linked with their religion. Another marked influence the Nile left on its





FIG. 1. EGYPTIAN RELIEF OF THE TIME OF RAMESIS II



people was its isolation, for the country of the Nile was bounded on two sides by deserts, which strengthened the pride of the Egyptians. The Nile having no tributaries, influenced the people to follow the example of their sacred river, and not to mingle with others. This influence of the Nile left its mark on the art of the people as well, for one cannot understand the art of a people if one knows nothing of the forces that mould their thoughts. It must be remembered that art at that time was not divorced from actual life, but was an inherent part of life. Art found expression in the simplest cooking utensils, as well as expressing itself in architecture or in the ceremonies of the temples and the court. As art in those days was also a language, it was in the language of art that the records of the deeds of heroes were carved. (**Fig. 1.**)

It is important to touch upon Egypt, however briefly, because of the influence it exercised on early Greece which was the first great Western civilization, and no art in turn has left so great an influence on European art as has the Greek art. One must realize that all this influence works through the imagination which should be educated and controlled. This was not always understood, for only recently, through the new excavations led by Dr. A. J. Evans in 1900, it was discovered how far back Greek civilization went. The Egyptian and Assyrian (**Fig. 2**) influences on Greece were not known till then, and so we took literally what should have been taken symbolically. Therefore there was little understanding of the Greeks' use of color or of their mental attitude towards their statues. It was not as literal as it was at first supposed to be, for their art of phrenology has been lost. The statues of their gods were symbolic, representing certain traits. Therefore the statue of Zeus, who represented more universally the attribute of a benevolent monarch, was quite differently portrayed from that of Athena, who represented wisdom; or Apollo, who represented music;

or Mercury, who represented swiftness. In fact, we now realize that the statues of the Greek gods were no more gods to the educated people than the statues in a Catholic church are gods to the Catholics. In the same spirit of emphasizing certain qualities did the Greeks make the statues of their great men. If a man rose to such fame that his statue should be placed in the public market, those attributes of his which had made him of value to the community were emphasized.

Unfortunately very little is known of Greek painting and comparatively little remains, though paintings similar



FIG. 2. ASSYRIAN RELIEF. THE LION HUNT

to the illustration chosen of a "Woman from Thebes" (Fig. 3) can be studied in most museums. As a result, the art of painting has always remained freer from the influence of Greek art than either sculpture, architecture or design. In sculpture it was the excavations made at the time of the Renaissance which were the impetus which started Michaelangelo and ended with Rodin. When however not understood or assimilated, it ended in the deadly monotonous sweetness as seen in the art of Thorvaldsen the Dane (1770-1844), whose fame reigned supreme in northern Europe the middle of the last century. A new influence is now making itself felt, based on the art of the Greek vase, through Mr. Hambridge's contribution

of his book "Dynamic Symmetry, the Greek Vase," in which he shows the laws on which the Greeks constructed and designed them.

As Europe, especially the art of Italy and France, has left its deepest influence on the art of America, so the Greek art exercised its influence on Rome, until the Romans



FIG. 3. GREEK PAINTING

grew sufficiently in power to give expression to their own art. Their chief interest being government and conquest, they reached their highest development in their art of architecture and road building. These reached a higher state of development than their art of sculpture or painting which continued to show the Greek influence. Since there was little vital interest in these arts, the Roman artists rarely became originators, but remained chiefly

copyists, which showed its decaying influence in the realistic tendencies of their work, for true art contains the severe reserve which places the emphasis only on the essentials. Therefore if one desires to feel the real conscious beauty of Roman art, one must look for it not in their sculpture, but in their roads, arches, colosseums and viaducts. May not the same be true of the art of America of today? Is not the strength and beauty to be found in our railroads, bridges, skyscrapers and plumbing, rather than in our painting and sculpture? Does not our imagination rather run along those lines? Does it not prove that it has been developed along the material rather than the immaterial, the concrete, rather than the divine? For it takes imagination to create, but it is for us to choose its form. Shall we always be contented with the lesser — as Rome was — and perished?



### III

## THE CHAIN OF WESTERN ART FROM THE BYZANTINE TO POST-IMPRESSIONISM

IN tracing the influences which cause that inner urge to express itself in art, we find them, as always, belonging to the great spiritual forces that continue to unfold and develop the spirit of man. It is the recognition of these forces which alone enables one to differentiate between the art of a fleeting moment, an extraneous expression of art which may be the idiosyncrasy of an individual often very gifted, and those lasting expressions which show the steady and constant development of a spiritual force which is finding an outlet through an ever growing group of individuals.

It was therefore not strange that in the 5th Century A.D. there developed out of the East, in Constantinople, a new art known as the Byzantine Art, which received its impetus from the early Greek Christian Church. It was a strange union of early Christian reserve with the oriental love of color.

Byzantine Art  
6th to 12th  
Centuries

The Jewish Religion, from which the Christian Church sprang, had never allied itself with the art of painting or sculpture. It was not, therefore, until the conversion of other nations to Christianity that the religious scruples or customs in giving expression to these arts were overcome.

During the first centuries the prevailing art of the country was utilized, and little difference is to be found between the Roman, Greek, or early Christian art of that period, as is illustrated by the paintings on the walls of the catacombs at Rome; an example of which is shown here (**Fig. 4**), where the fresco representing a 'Madonna and Child' might easily be taken to represent a Greek

mother with her little one in her arms. It is the portrait of an earnest woman, but the unconventional pose robs it of all the religious feeling we are accustomed to look for in a religious painting. Christianity, however,



FIG. 4. EARLY CHRISTIAN ART FROM THE CATACOMBS.  
MADONNA AND CHILD

was too alive a force in the world not to develop its own art, after it felt the need of utilizing it, which resulted in the first great expression of the Byzantine. This reached its greatest flowering in the 6th Century, culminating in a second between the 10th and 12th Centuries, as is illustrated here (**Fig. 5**), representing the Byzantine conception of the Madonna and Child deified with the Apostles

below, executed for St. Vitales in Ravenna, Italy, in the 11th Century. After the 12th Century the Byzantine Art again degenerated into mere form from which the spirit had fled. It was the revulsion from this degeneration that the early Italian Primitives sprang, for the By-



FIG. 5. BYZANTINE ART. MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED WITH THE APOSTLES

zantine Art as we notice had moved westward and taken strong root in Italy, where many of the finest examples are still to be found in Venice and Ravenna.

All new impetus in the arts, as we see, springs from a desire to recall the spirit of life which has fled; to introduce those new forces which are leaving their vital influence on the people of that day. Thus it was that the



early Primitive Italians refused to be mere channels for the continuation of tradition, but began to desire to give expression to their own vital feeling of their love for humanity. The spirit had fled from the Byzantine Art, it had degenerated into mere empty formalism to which the people no longer responded. A new spirit was making itself felt and the artists of those days who were alive and sensitive to their era had to give expression to it. This caused the great break between the Byzantine and the early Italian Primitives. Cimabue, who was most closely associated with the Byzantine school, forms the connecting link between the old and the new. In his painting (Fig. 6) of a 'Madonna and Child Enthroned with Angels and Four Prophets,' now in the Academia in Florence, we see the highest expression of the new spirit which Cimabue reached in breaking away from the Byzantine Art. The first achievement of this break, in his picture of the Virgin for the Rucellai Chapel of Santa Maria Novella, called forth such enthusiasm, because of the new vitality flowing forth from it, that the picture was carried in triumph from the master's workshop to the church.

From records of that day we notice that to the people of those times a much greater difference was felt between the art of Cimabue and the Byzantine school than we are conscious of, who have been so deeply influenced by the later men, for we cannot escape the impress of history or the men who make it. The Byzantine Art was an art of symbolism which had been evolved out of the early Greek Christian Church. The Holy of Holies was something that could not be expressed, except through symbolism. The human mind could not grasp it in any other form. Christ had spoken in parables and so the early Christian Church had turned to parables in art, through symbolism. The public of that day, I believe, felt that it was a sacrilegious act for Cimabue, Duccio, Giotto and their followers to introduce the human



element born from a love of humanity. The Virgin, from being a reserved, cold, symbolic deity, as expressed in the Byzantine Art, expresses in the paintings of Cimabue the faintest glimmer of love for the child she holds in her arms. (Contrast **Fig. 6** with **Fig. 5**.) To us, accustomed to the



Fig. 6. CIMABUE. MADONNA AND CHILD ENTHRONED  
WITH ANGELS AND FOUR PROPHETS

sacredness of motherhood, the Madonnas of Cimabue appear almost as cold and distant as those of the Byzantine school. We can distinguish little difference, but to the people of that period, a great distinction was made between humanity and their gods. The human element was deliberately withheld from their art as pertaining to the lower emotions and no

feelings were supposed to be portrayed. It is only since we have raised motherhood to a sacred height, that the feeling of motherhood could be allied with religious art. These men, therefore, in their vision of a purified humanity, were the forerunners of the coming times.



Fig. 7. Duccio. ALTAR PIECE (DETAIL)

In the passing of the twenty years between Cimabue and Duccio, the ever-widening change between the Primitive Italians and the Byzantines, can easily be traced. Greater variety of human feelings are portrayed in the paintings by Duccio, as is to be seen in the illustration (Fig. 7) which gives a detail from 'The Crucifixion,' the altar piece in the Cathedral of Siena.

Duccio  
1260-1339  
Sienese  
School

Here you will observe that the grief of the Virgin and the apostles is very poignant. It expresses infinitely more feeling than can be traced in any of the paintings by Cimabue, and went entirely against the canons of the Byzantine Art.

In considering the sequence that builds the chain of art for Europe the ages down, I have tried to mention those men who continued to be the pathfinders. For we cannot hope to understand Modern Art if we have no knowledge of what preceded it. It was only possible to make the barest selection in so brief a sketch. I will therefore just touch upon what the men who appear most important have achieved, and let the choice of illustrations weave the chain of development. My desire is to stimulate the reader to delve more deeply into the realm of art, until he awakens to the consciousness that art must be given its proper place in everyday life, for art is a part of man.

It was Giotto who introduced the first truly dramatic elements of daily life into painting. He was also the first to awaken a definite interest in perspective, which in time, because of the false importance placed upon its relation to art, has become one of the most serious stumbling-blocks to the appreciation of true art in the Western world. For perspective belongs to skill and dexterity and as such has little connection with what is actual art. A picture may contain excellently constructed perspective, and yet contain no art, or it may contain no perspective and be a splendid example of art. Here is one of the greatest confusions that exists today. It was not the perspective, but the new note of introducing the illusion of the world we live in, which made it of importance in a Giotto, as it emphasized the interest in humanity which the Italian Primitives introduced. But all this would have been of no value in art if its placement in the picture and its relation to the whole had not been subject to the fundamental laws of art. In the thirty-eight frescoes in the Arena Chapel at Padua, representing the Life of Christ and the

Giotto  
1236-1337  
Florentine  
School



Virgin Mary, one can clearly study both the dramatic qualities and the elements of perspective which he introduced. The illustration shown here (**Fig. 8**) represents the 'Birth of the Virgin Mary' and is one of the group out of the Arena Chapel. The composition is greatly added to by the elimination of time and the introduction on the same fresco of another scene, where the little one is being cleansed. Whether this scene precedes the presentation of the child to St. Anne or follows



Fig. 8. GIOTTO. BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN

it, is of no consequence; the beauty lies in the division of space and the repetition of the halos in the design which would have been lost if only two had been introduced. This most likely gave rise to the introduction of the second scene.

To Giotto can be ascribed the greatest impetus towards the development of art in the Western world, which rose to the Renaissance and ended with the French Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. It was the love of humanity which was the inspiration of these men and contained the seed for

future development. It is they who illustrate the power of the human mind in giving birth to new conceptions. Many a later man followed, but these blazed the path, and they should receive the honor. It is well, therefore, to remember when they lived. Life is strange, and sometimes the greatest honor has fallen not to the men who made life go on, but to those men who through their charm or sweetness have introduced the poison that led to decay and destruction.

After the death of Giotto, art again fell into decay for a short period. There were not enough men of originality and strength to carry on the torch. Duccio had died before Giotto, and Andrea Orcagna was still too young to let his impress be felt. And it is here that I would like to pause to draw attention to the hasty judgment of today. Time is an important element in all development. It cannot be hastened, a fact we seem to forget. A period of about 300 years elapsed before the Byzantine Art was evolved, about 200 years between the full flower of the Byzantine Art and the final decay which caused the rebellion which took place under the leadership of Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto, in the 13th Century. It is just as probable that the followers of the Byzantine school who looked upon the early Italian Primitives as destroyers of art, as those adherents of the past do today, rejoiced at this period of unfruitfulness which occurred during the time that Orcagna grew into manhood. One can hear them jeer at the followers of Giotto, stating that the new art was dying out. History seems to repeat itself, and there seems nothing new under the sun — what appears as new apparently are manifestations of forgotten truths or knowledge. But this new expression in art was not to die out, and it was Orcagna who once more lifted high the torch which Giotto's followers had let fall, and through his extraordinary beauty of line and reserve, his strong individuality which never usurped its proper place, brought back new life and vigor into art. This is clearly shown in (Fig. 9) a detail from the 'Last Judg-

Orcagna  
1308-1368  
Florentine  
School

ment' in the Strozzi Chapel of Santa Maria Novella, Florence. The figure of the Madonna kneeling in adoration is especially fine in detail, though taking its proper place in the composition as a whole. Like so many men of that period, Orcagna was trained in all the arts, as painter, sculptor, and architect.



Fig. 9. ORCAGNA. LAST JUDGMENT (DETAIL)

The chain of art is continued in Massacio, who was the first of the painters to emphasize the more realistic note.

Massacio  
1402-1428  
Florentine  
School

He was also the first of the painters of Europe to free art from the purely religious and devotional attitude, and to emphasize the artists' (or what may be termed the pagan) point of view. This left a very deep and lasting influence, for it eventually loosened



the bonds which had made art the handmaiden of the church and gave her back her own freedom which she had more or less lost under the sweep of the influence of Christianity and its first expression in art, through the Greek Church. One realizes how very important Massacio is in the world of

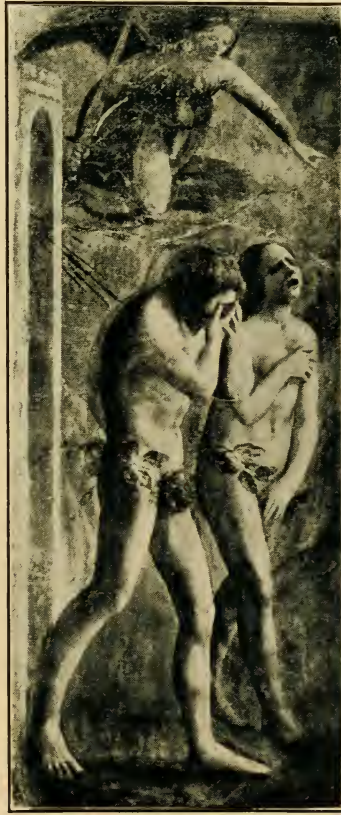


Fig. 10. MASSACIO. EXPULSION FROM PARADISE

art, when one recalls that it was his frescoes at the Brancacci Chapel in the Church of Santa Maria Del Carmine at Florence to which Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael devoted their time and study, and no fresco was studied more by these great masters than his famous panel of the "Expulsion from Paradise" (Fig. 10). No picture had thus far portrayed such grief and despair as is shown here — but one

must always bear in mind that this is an enlarged vision and was not achieved through sacrificing any of the fundamental laws governing art. The emotion was added to the fine composition which is brought out chiefly through the encircling arms of the avenging angel, who protects at the same time that he metes out the punishment. The whole composition needs much study, and shows the great step taken in the development of the art, which had as its impetus the love of humanity, as it was beginning to round its circle. Fra Filippo Lippi was Massacio's pupil, and like Massacio turned his back on the religious impulse and his eye towards man.

Many do not realize how advanced art was at this time in the north of Europe and look only towards Italy. But

Jan Van Eyck  
1381-1440  
Flemish  
School

art was extremely international even in those days, and we find as great a perfection in Flanders and France as in Italy, though maybe not expressed by as many painters. No chain would be complete without the mention of Jan Van Eyck, whose extraordinary power of detail, always subservient to the whole, recalls the mastery of certain Chinese painters who never lost sight of their complete vision, no matter how minute their love of detail. In the illustration given here of a 'Flemish Merchant and His Lady' (**Fig. 11**), in the National Gallery in London, this point is clearly brought out.

Jean Fouquet, one of the very earliest masters of the French School, must also be included at this period. His

Fouquet  
1420-1480  
French  
School

simplicity of modeling and beauty of technique and finish cause his paintings to rank with any of the Italian masters of this period. Notice the fineness of conception in (**Fig. 12**) a 'Portrait of a Man.' Where the Italians excelled the painters of other nations was in the richness and vitality of their imagination.

A complete change in the technique of painting took place during the period of the late 15th and early 16th Century. Previous to this the early Italian Primitives had painted their panels on wood, in colors of the sunset, with the





Fig. 11. VAN EYCK. FLEMISH MERCHANT AND HIS LADY

light shining from behind, as one discovers when looking into the sunset. Their panels were prepared with white ground made of cesso, on which they painted transparently. This gave to their paintings the brilliancy and luminosity at which we all marvel. But towards the end of the 15th and the beginning of the early 16th Centuries the painters turned



Fig. 12. FOUQUET. PORTRAIT OF A MAN

their backs on transparent color and experimented in painting as looking toward the East, away from the sunset, where the colors are reflected back from a dark background. They chose the dark background looking away from the light, which reflects colors and introduces the richness and depth of shadows which Rembrandt developed to completion. Anyone interested in this technical problem can make his experiment, by taking a wooden panel and preparing half of its background

with a white cesso and the other half with a dark red-brown or black, running the colors in stripes across. A most illuminating result follows and illustrates clearly the difference which resulted from these two points of view, which so strongly divide the early Italian Primitives from the cinque-centist.



Fig. 13. MANTEGNA. TRIUMPH OF WISDOM VICTORIOUS OVER VICE

Mantegna was among the earliest to make this experiment and to choose these dark backgrounds on which to paint his pictures, as well as being among the first to engrave on copper. He took great delight in working on figures in perspective and was the first of the Italian masters to enjoy this sport in dexterity, in which the Italians have surpassed the painters of all other nations. It is the admiration for this dexterity which has confused the Western mind, especially when we remember that "skill" is Webster's definition of art. Mantegna, educated in Padua, famous for Giotto's great

Mantegna  
1431-1506  
Paduan  
School



frescoes and Donatello's statues, nevertheless held more closely to the tradition of the Church. His fertile imagination carried him into other fields besides religious painting, as is shown in the 'Triumph of Wisdom Victorious over Vice' (Fig. 13), which now hangs in the Louvre in Paris.



Fig. 14. BELLINI. MADONNA AND CHILD WITH SIX SAINTS

The great colorists of Italy sprang from the soil of Venice, where the Byzantine Art with its love of rich color first found deep root. Herein lies the inspiration for these men as well as the continued trading with the East which left its mark on the art of Venice, through the wonderful fabrics and other merchandise which came pouring in. It was Giovanni Bellini who was

Bellini  
1427-1516  
Venetian  
School

the first to emphasize color, and who raised it to such heights that for centuries to come all Venetian painters were considered the greatest colorists in the Western world of art. In contrast to the work of his pupils, especially Giorgione, his color seems dull in comparison, but one must remember that he was the first to emphasize the value of color. Such strides have been made, especially along these lines, in modern times that it is hard to transpose oneself back to the days of Bellini where the architectural still dominated the painting. This can be clearly seen in (Fig. 14) the 'Madonna and Child with Six Saints' now hanging in the Academy at Venice. He was the teacher of two of the great Venetian masters, Titian and Giorgione.

It was Giorgione who carried this richness and depth of color, of color looking away from the sunset, to the greatest heights of the 16th Century. It is this which places him so firmly in the chain of art, though so few of his paintings are extant. He not only enlarged upon the teachings of Bellini, but while on a visit to Florence, having seen paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, his senior by twenty-five years, he united his great knowledge of color with the softness and depth which Leonardo had then already achieved — which carried the flower of the Renaissance to a greater completion. His fame as a portrait painter excelled all others of his time as can be readily seen in (Fig. 15) a portrait of a 'Knight of Malta.' Though Titian was his contemporary he gained so much from his association with Giorgione that tradition for years termed him his pupil.

All the great artists of our Western world have had much of the inventor in them. It is this quality of the inventor which seems necessary for the continuation of the art of Europe, and which brings out the difference which lies between the West and the East, where the adherence to tradition does not seem to cause the deterioration of art, as with us.

Giorgione  
1477-1511  
Venetian  
School

Leonardo  
da Vinci  
1452-1519  
Florentine  
School

With some, invention took the form of a new technique, or the solving of the problem of light, while with others it followed many lines; for the artists of those days were more rounded in their lives than the average artist has been since the introduction of machinery. Primarily the



Fig. 15. GIORGIONE. PORTRAIT OF A KNIGHT OF MALTA

greatest inventor among the artists of the past was Leonardo da Vinci. Unfortunately his experiments in color have caused his pictures to suffer to such an extent that it is impossible for us to receive but the faintest semblance of how he expressed himself through color. This has placed both Giorgione and Titian as the greater colorists in the history of art, though contemporary critics of their day



do not leave that impression on one. Leonardo possessed an extraordinary personality which dominated his entire life and led him not alone into painting, sculpture and architecture, but caused him to take up engineering, and delve into the laws of gravitation. For years he worked on



Fig. 16. DA VINCI. MADONNA OF THE ROCKS

making possible the flight in air which we have only mastered now. His interest in philosophy, botany and astronomy would have given him a name in these subjects as well. His ideals were so high that he never succeeded in satisfying himself. His writings on art, and his studies of anatomy were held to be the most complete rules given

for centuries to artists of the Western world. His greatest influence has always been through his stupendous intellectual powers. The unanswerable enthralled him most, and so it was that he sought to portray the smile which was an enigma. In his 'Mona Lisa,' he achieved his greatest triumph, though traces of this smile are found in his Madonnas as is seen in **Fig. 16**. It is this smile which captures most people, forgetting that it is only a part of the whole. It was the beauty of the way he filled his space, his line and depth, which should be studied, for they are the fundamentals of art and place him where he stands. This is to be seen and to be observed in his 'Madonna of the Rocks' (**Fig. 16**), one of which hangs in the Louvre and the other in the National Gallery, London. It is tragic to think that two such great men as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo should have been rivals, instead of friends; but Michelangelo, the younger of the two, did not value Leonardo as a painter. This, combined with Michelangelo winning a competition in which they had both entered, embittered Leonardo.

Leonardo's most important pupil was Luini, in whose paintings are to be found traces of that smile which enchanted his master. The sweetness and gentleness of Luini's paintings must endear them especially to the layman, and no painter of his day painted children as did he. It is curious that a man of such mental vigor as Leonardo, should have left as his most famous pupil a man chiefly revered and honored for his sweetness, gentleness and high religious fervor.

From Leonardo we turn to the great German painter, wood-engraver and etcher, Albrecht Dürer, who spent much time in Italy at various periods of his life. It is his painting of 'The Adoration of the Trinity' (**Fig. 17**), at the Vienna Museum, which is illustrated here and which brings out his virility of composition. In the brilliancy of the color, as is to be

Dürer  
1471-1528  
German  
School



seen in this picture, he is the rival of the painters of the early Italian school. His fame spread throughout Europe and his pictures were sought by all the great collectors of his day; his powerful imagination finding outlet in strong compositions, especially in his etchings and wood-engravings.



Fig. 17. DÜRER. ADORATION OF THE TRINITY

The introduction of the radiation of light, that luminous quality of radiation which Rembrandt developed to its highest point, was first introduced by Corregio, who came from the north of Italy. In his picture, "The Holy Night" (Fig. 18) now in the Dresden Gallery, he introduced this new theme, of light radiating from the Christ Child as a light would radiate from a lamp. We see how totally different this approach towards light in art is from that of

Corregio  
1494-1534  
Lombard  
School

the other men whom we have considered, and how this thought lay practically dormant until carried to completion by Rembrandt more than a hundred years later. In studying art, it is well to remember how centuries have



Fig. 18. CORREGIO. THE HOLY NIGHT

sometimes passed before a new thought found its completion. Critics and public are apt to forget this in conjunction with new ideas which find new expression in the art world.

Presumably no man has at various times, consciously or unconsciously, left so great an influence on art as has Hans Holbein, the younger, whose career, through the influence of Sir Thomas More, was chiefly spent in

England. It is his great simplicity of line and flatness of modeling which give him such a decided place in the chain of art, as is to be seen in (Fig. 19) the 'Portrait of a Woman.' Two hundred years later this simplicity was once more taken up by Goya, the Spaniard; next Ingres took it up, then Manet, and now it has been carried to a still further simplicity by

Hans Holbein  
1497-1543  
German  
School



Fig. 19. HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER. PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN

Matisse; but Matisse has never achieved the technical mastery of these other men. It is this lack of technical mastery which causes many critics to hesitate in giving him his full due.



Michelangelo, one of the few truly great geniuses the world has ever produced, in any branch of art, still dominates the average sculptor to this day, more than four hundred years later, by his mastery of form. Out of his stone and marble he hewed his marvelous creations. He did not make small statues out of plaster for others to enlarge in marble or stone. Thus he succeeded in adding an atmosphere

Michelangelo  
1474-1564  
Florentine  
School

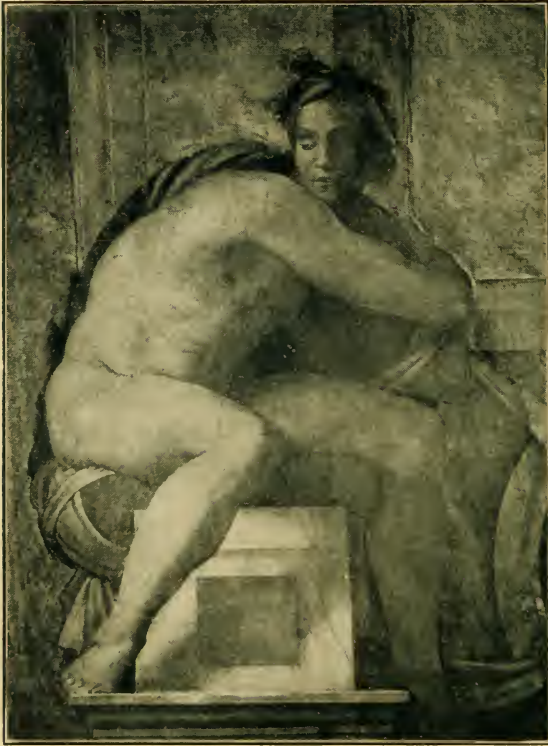


Fig. 20. MICHELANGELO. ATHLETIC FIGURE ON THE RIGHT OF THE SEBYAN SYBYL

of subtlety to his powerful figures which only those of his followers have achieved who follow his method of work.

Though also a great painter, he was unable to reach the same height as a painter that he achieved as sculptor. His paintings remained cold and lifeless compared to what

his chisel produced; they were treated as if in relief, and contain a hardness which would have brought oblivion to a lesser man. His powerful lines and knowledge of balance carry him through as a painter and cause him to rank as one of the greatest. In the illustration given here (**Fig. 20**) it is almost impossible to tell whether it is the reproduction of a statue or a painting. Herein lies a certain confusion of mediums, which always brings out a weakness, and shows clearly that Michelangelo was always the sculptor, whether his medium was paint or stone. The original (**Fig. 20**) is a detail of the fresco decorations which Michelangelo painted for the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. It is this vigor which made him hate Raphael, whose excessive sweetness and facility hold poison.

To Michelangelo art was art, and could take any form. Therefore he stopped at nothing, and it is interesting to see the beautiful wrought-iron gratings, which were customary in his day, and which he made for the windows of the houses of Florence. Like Leonardo da Vinci he was universal, and through his exquisite sonnets takes his place in literature as well. His great knowledge of engineering caused him to be chosen to plan and design some of the best fortifications of his day.

Certain names have always stood out in the history of art and none more clearly than that of Titian, the Venetian. His long life, combined with his unflagging zeal, energy, and great love of color, gave to the world some splendid portraits and easel pictures. His compositions never reached the heights which those of Tintoretto, Veronese or Rubens did, those past masters of composition. This can be clearly seen by two pictures in the Prado, Madrid, where Rubens, while ambassador at the court of Spain, copied Titian's 'Adam and Eve,' improving on the composition, which two pictures now hang side by side. One must also bear in mind the great confusion which exists, as to who is the artist,

Titian  
1477-1576  
Venetian  
School

between easel pictures painted by Titian and those painted by Giorgione, which confusion has not yet been completely cleared away. Yet the example chosen here of 'The Crown of Thorns' (**Fig. 21**) shows why Titian enjoyed the reputation he received in his day.

In great contrast to Titian and his love of this world was Tintoretto with his deep religious strain, free from religious conventions and the non-religious attitude which marred the paintings of many of the lesser artists of that period. Though less well known to the average public than Titian, he is not only his equal technically, but through the power of his imagination far surpasses him. No situation was too difficult for him to handle, and the beauty of his vigor and vitality of line may well be studied in the illustration given here of his fresco of 'Moses Striking Water Out of a Rock' (**Fig. 22**) in the Scuola San Rocco, Venice. There are few men in the Western world who ever reached his height as to the beauty and rhythm of line. His virility of imagination and independence of Church tradition are well illustrated in another fresco representing the 'Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness' in the same Scuola San Rocco. Here we find Christ, not tempted by the devil as is generally depicted, but tempted by youth and beauty, the forces of earth versus the spiritual forces, which is the choice that confronts us all, and which are the real temptations of life. He was therefore one of the most vital painters and thinkers of his age, and brought new vigor to the almost worn-out Bible subjects. He never lost sight of the spiritual qualities, yet remained always the painter. This was in great contrast to Paul Veronese, whose love of the gay, voluptuous life of the Venice of that day made his paintings religious only in name. It is well illustrated by the reproduction given here of his 'Marriage at Cana' (**Fig. 23**) the original of which is in Dresden. Here you get the spirit of the Renaissance rather than the in-

Tintoretto  
1518-1594  
Venetian  
School





Fig. 21. TITIAN. THE CROWN OF THORNS



Fig. 22. TINTORETTO. MOSES STRIKING WATER FROM THE ROCKS

terpretation of the first miracle, which mystery might still have been introduced through color. It is through the mystery of color that Tintoretto excels as well, with that touch of Spanish aloofness which adds greatly to the dignity of any work of art.

It is very fitting, therefore, that El Greco should follow Tintoretto, for they both possessed a nervous energy and vitality which left a deep mark on art. El Greco, born of Greek parents in Italy, went to Spain when quite young, where he remained his entire life and which became his field of activity. Because of his parentage he received the title of El Greco

El Greco  
1548-1628  
Spanish  
School



Fig. 23. VERONESE. THE MARRIAGE AT CANA

instead of being known by his own name of Domenico Theotocopuli. He was one of the most important painters of his day. Then came a period when he was almost forgotten, during the years when photography was first invented and so-called 'correct drawing' was worshipped, which after all was nothing but an empty academic point of view, of drawing the figure from a definite vanishing point in perspective. So it was that he was forgotten and ignored, thought of as strange and one who could 'not draw.' It was not until the 'Moderns' recognized that he was the first to develop in painting the fluidity of life



in man, and not to paint man as conventionally conceived, that his true value reappeared. This is clearly illustrated in (**Fig. 24**) the painting of the 'Virgin with the Apostles,' now hanging in the Prado in Madrid. It shows how he did away with the rigidity which must necessarily come when light and shade conventionally follow bone construction. This gives to his figures a sense of flexibility which is amazing. For prior to this, shadows were mainly used to show the bone construction and the development of the muscles, through the effect of a studio light from one definite direction—but not as a play of light as it naturally falls. It was he who broke the rigid tradition of a conventional light and shade, and was the first to paint light and shade as he actually perceived it, playing over the human figure. It took more than two hundred years for this thought to reach its completion through the Impressionists, in the last half of the 19th Century, who centered their energies and profound studies on light effects.

Quite in contrast to El Greco follows the Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens. Instead of loving the ascetics of the mind, he loved the exuberance of life, the beautiful flesh tints of fair women. It is this which turns people who have a puritanical tendency with abhorrence from him. He loved life and the energies which make life vital. You feel this tremendous vitality through all his masterful compositions, which however are never riotous as are those of his followers, for he always kept the balance needed in all great works of art. His 'seeing eye' observed that in the quality of beautiful fair skin and flesh there lies a tone which greatly contributes to color. It is this new contribution, rather than his masterful composition, for which he is most honored. For this reason his painting (**Fig. 25**) of 'Nymphs Filling the Horn of Plenty' was chosen, rather than one of his powerful, exuberant compositions. Presumably nobody since the days of Bellini has added to the increase of the

Rubens  
1577-1640  
Flemish  
School



Fig. 24. EL GRECO. THE VIRGIN WITH THE APOSTLES

power of color in painting, to the same extent as did Rubens. This means actual color, not color within color, or the color harmony of one shade to another, neither is the word used as meaning warmth or fluidity in contrast to hardness; all these meanings have come to be associated with the word 'color' in later years, when color became the keynote of painting in place of composition. In studying Rubens great care must be exercised in differentiating between the work actually done by his brush and that which was executed by



Fig. 25. RUBENS. NYMPHS FILLING THE HORN OF PLENTY

his workshop, of which the design only is his. Rubens was a powerful personality and as we have already seen was a successful ambassador to Spain, besides all his other activities.

Spain had its great period of art under Philip IV, with Velasquez as court painter, at the time when Rubens was sent there as ambassador. Few men have exercised such an extraordinary influence on the American artists of the last half of the 19th Century as have Velasquez and Franz Hals on Sargent, Chase, Cecilia Beaux and their followers. It is Velasquez's luminosity in the grey treatment of shad-

Velasquez  
1599-1660  
Spanish  
School



ows, which gives him so high a place in the realm of art, which is to be found later in Goya and the English portrait painters of the 18th Century as well. In the illustration given here of the 'Conquest of Brera' (Fig. 26) Velasquez's power in composition is shown, which has been so little emphasized of late years.

At the time of Velasquez in Spain, there lived and worked in Holland a painter by the name of Franz Hals,



Fig. 26. VELASQUEZ. CONQUEST OF BRERA

whose point of view in art appears to be separated from that of his brilliant Spanish confrere only by the difference in nationality. This is of special interest as the two men never met as far as is known. Their technical mastery unites them as well, which seems to be also an expression of their day.

Franz Hals  
1584-1666  
Dutch  
School

Where Franz Hals excels Velasquez is in the deeper insight into human life and the characters he portrays. Where Velasquez excels is in his finer compositions or the place-



Fig. 27. HALS. REPAST OF THE OFFICERS OF ST. GEORGE

ment of his subjects on the canvas. In the reproduction given here (**Fig. 27**) of the 'Repast of the Officers of the Archers of St. George,' hanging in the museum of his native town of Halem, the profound character study of the master can be seen. It chances to be at the same time one of his best compositions.

In great contrast to the dexterity of Velasquez and Franz Hals is Rembrandt, who went into the very depths of life as have few painters. His subjects are immaterial. Take for example his great painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts of 'The Woman Paring Her Nails' (**Fig.**

Rembrandt  
1607-1669  
Dutch  
School

**28**) which is given here as an illustration. His master mind could create art out of nothing. It is this note which Rembrandt was the first to strike, of making art supreme, which Van Gogh was the next to take up, and which the extreme Modernists are emphasizing by leaving the subject matter entirely in abeyance, devoting themselves only to the art in the abstract form. It is not the subject which holds you, and which Rembrandt emphasizes, but the balance of light and shade, as well as the flashes of color which proceed therefrom.

Few of us in America, I think, realize Rembrandt's contribution through his etchings and drawings. Though not a churchman, he possessed a strong religious nature, and was deeply concerned and interested in both the Old and New Testaments, which scenes he portrayed with a vigor and depth of feeling which only Tintoretto had reached, but each in his own rich individual way.

With Rembrandt, the great period in art came to a close. The next century produced what in contrast were merely trivial dexterous painters, the most important of these being Watteau (1684-1721). But dexterity rested like a dead hand on art and its curse is felt in the paintings of all the men of that period. Though Tiepolo (1696-1770) should be mentioned, he was but a spurt from out





Fig. 28. REMBRANDT. WOMAN PARING HER NAILS

of the past, as is often to be found, and only kept alive certain traditions. Among the many dexterous painters, full of charm, who followed in the line of Watteau, which the 18th Century produced, presumably the most important of these is Fragonard (1732-1806). However, a period of one hundred years had to elapse before there appeared another flash of genius.

This was Goya, who, sharply satirical, was wont to say that he saw in nature only objects in light and shade.

"I can not count the hairs in the beard of a man, and my brush cannot see more than I."

Goya  
1746-1828

He stands for great simplicity, as is seen in the reproduction given here (Fig. 29), called

Spanish  
School

'The Vendor' now at the Prado in Madrid. One need only contrast this simplicity with the works of the men who preceded him, to realize the greatness of his contribution. It is this simplicity which links him to Holbein and Fouquet, while he hands it on to Ingres, Manet and Matisse.

The only man to live through the period of the introduction of machinery and recognize its inherent beauty and possibility was Turner. Again this understanding of the inherent beauty of machinery lay dormant for nearly half a century (as we have seen has happened again and again to

Turner  
1775-1851  
English  
School

other thoughts throughout the history of art), before the extreme Modernist further developed Turner's appreciation of the machine. Both bring out the inherent beauty that lies in this expression of force, but whereas Turner developed more the romantic side, the Modernists are more and more developing the destructive side of an uncontrolled power. But Turner was the forerunner of the French Impressionist school as well, though isolated from them and living more than half a century before their time. His extraordinary rendering of light, combined with his powerful imagination, creates for him an important place in the chain of art. That he is not universally regarded in higher





Fig. 29. GOYA. THE VENDOR

esteem is mainly due to the fact that he sprang from a nation which has little tradition in art and causes him rather to appear as a meteor in the heavens. His great picture, 'Rain, Steam and Speed' (Fig. 30) shows how modern his point of view is even today, the point of view which demands that a man express the period in which he lives.

Our next man in the chronological order chosen is Jean Ingres, whose influence is perhaps more strongly felt today



Fig. 30. TURNER. RAIN, STEAM, AND SPEED

than it has been for the past fifty years. His 'Odalisque' (Fig. 31) as well as 'La Source' are the clearest examples of what he stood for. His work has forced its attention upon us, because of its cold, classic reserve, in contrast to the ever straining desire of certain artists of the last thirty years to rival the photographic lens. The public is just beginning to awaken to the consciousness that photography can never be the

Jean Ingres  
1830-1861  
French  
School

rival of art. There was a time when it naïvely thought the lens more accurate than the trained eye, not realizing that it never was able to place the middle distance in the proper relation to the foreground. This thought had so permeated the public, that there were artists actually trying to prove this theory to be true, forgetting as well, that one of the chief functions of art is selection, and that selection contains within itself the elements of reserve. No lens has as yet been invented which will at command emphasize certain forms or



Fig. 31. INGRES. ODALISQUE

eliminate others, or which can give even accurate reproductions of the proper proportions of one given object to another.

In contrast to Ingres, is Menzel (German School 1815-1890), virile and inexhaustible, giving us pictures of his period which show a vitality few artists have surpassed. It was he who with Turner was the first to attempt to express the power of steam, to express his age in all its phases, wherein lies his value.

It is important to draw attention here to another painter who has left his mark on the coming era, Whistler (American School 1834-1903), who was the first to object definitely to titles for his pictures. Instead he laid emphasis on what he



was trying to achieve in art, by refusing to give the names of the actual scenes he had painted, which was the intellectual grasp of the essentials and the breaking up of the tradition of titles. Whistler's greatest service to art was his education of the public through his whimsicality rather than his actual contribution in art. He lived at a time when people were stifled with the unessentials and he had both the vision and the courage to sweep them all away.

As we are approaching modern times, we are coming more and more to a new simplification of form and the growing importance of light and shade, with the new emphasis being laid on the color to be seen in shadow. The man who emphasized the simplification of form, who helped to reestablish the fundamental laws which governed mural decorations, was Puvis de Chavannes. In the illustration given here (**Fig. 32**) the original of which is in the Boston Public Library, you will find two splendid architectural figures supporting either side of the portal. This architectural feature is further preserved in the flatness and simplicity with which the figures of the entire decoration are painted and the color chosen, allows the whole to become a part of the wall. The balance is kept throughout yet leading the eye to the keynote of the composition. The airiness of the figures gives it a lightness of touch which has rarely been achieved. It is one of the finest examples of his decorations, as well as one of his last. It is this new simplification of form, the growing emphasis of which is placed on the essentials only, which the artist has deliberately selected, which is to be found in Modern Art. One can trace a very close connection between Chavannes's later work and the best works of Matisse, who belongs to the group which form the bridge to the Moderns.

Puvis de  
Chavannes  
1824-1883  
French  
School

The founder of the French Impressionist school, who not only placed emphasis on the essentials which the artist had selected but who developed color in shadows and



Fig. 32. DE CHIAVANNES. WALL DECORATION





Fig. 33. MANET. GIRL WITH A PARROT

tried to imprison the elusiveness of the moment, was Edward Manet. In the reproduction (**Fig. 33**) of the painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in New York, of the 'Girl with a Parrot,' a good example is to be seen, where the artist emphasizes the essentials of value to him. It was Manet with Monet who founded the Impressionist group and concentrating on the deeper study of light and shade drew attention

Manet  
1832-1883  
French  
School

to the beauty of color that lay in shadow, which the Pointelists carried to completion and of whom Seurat is one of their finest exponents. It was the final flare of the dying fire started by Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto which had burnt throughout these centuries before it gave way to the new era that was coming, the first signs of which we find manifesting themselves in the works of Rembrandt.

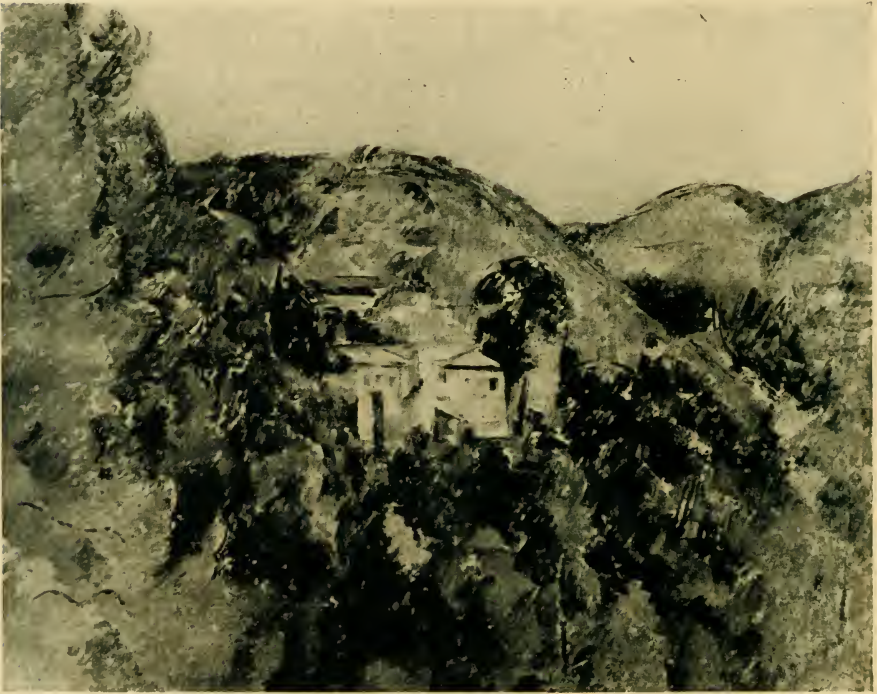


Fig. 34. CÉZANNE. THE POORHOUSE ON THE HILL

The last man to complete our chain of art and to bring it down to our present time is the great leader of the Post-Impressionists, Paul Cézanne, the father of the so-called Modernists. Post-Impressionism was the natural swing of the pendulum from the Impressionists, the men who tried to imprison the moment, imprison the ever changing light, whereas

Cézanne  
1839-1906  
French  
School

these men, whom critics named Post-Impressionists for lack of a better term, desired to go to the root of the matter. In painting a tree they wanted to make one conscious of the roots from which it sprang. It was the first conscious note of the dynamic in art. It is but natural, therefore, that the next step was what we in America term Modern Art, and that Cézanne should have been called the father thereof.



Fig. 35. VAN GOGH. ADOLESCENCE

The reason why he was named the father of this new movement, rather than Van Gogh or Gauguin, whose names are linked almost equally therewith, is because he holds within his art the greater germ for further development. Especially is this true through the technique which he introduced and which was the expression of the inner urge, which is clearly to be seen in the illustration given here (Fig. 34) of the 'Poorhouse on the Hill,' now at the Metro-



politan Museum of Fine Arts in New York. Though Van Gogh had this inner urge to an almost greater degree, and, like Rembrandt, could create art out of the simplest subject, he was too great an individualist and expressed himself through his technique in too complete and final terms, to enable others to evolve a further expression out of it. (See **Fig. 35**). In contrast, the urge of Gauguin was not a going forward, but a turning back to the purity of primitive man. It was therefore Cézanne's contribution through his new attitude towards color and his emphasis on only the essentials, that place him where he is. Like Cimabue he forms the bridge to the new art. Through his color within color, and the breaking up of hard surface forms, he prepared the ground for the future work. It is here we find the first note sounded of the increasing importance of what color is to mean to the eye, as well as the first search after the dynamic forces in life. He exercised deep influences which were not imitative but creative, and not the least among these was his attitude towards art—which was—that the only thing that mattered was creation—re-creation.



#### IV

#### WHAT NEXT ?

**I**T is too soon to state as to who will be chosen to follow Cézanne in the chain of art. This, however, does not mean that the chain of art came to an end with Cézanne, as many a person in the late nineties believed and taught that art had come to an end with the Renaissance. Art, as we see, can never come to an end while man exists, for art is inherent in man and belongs to the spiritual forces which make for his development. It is true, nevertheless, that at the present time we are facing what many term a revolution in art.

What is this revolution and is it more of a revolution or a greater break with the past, than was faced by the people of the 5th and 13th Centuries, when the Byzantine Art came into existence to give expression to the Christian doctrine, or when the early Italian Primitives sought to give expression to their love for humanity? To understand the aims which the leaders of the revolution of today are trying to reach, one must have an understanding of the conditions which preceded this so-called revolution.

It is therefore necessary for us to go back to the end of the last century, to have a clearer comprehension of the conditions under which art existed, and from which the present group rebelled. An era was coming to an end, and the popular artists or the artists of fashion of the last half of the last century were devoting almost their entire energy to the technical side of art, rather than to that inherent message which art must bring. The technique of painting would never have been called into existence, if it had not been to express some emotion or feeling, which as yet

could not be put into words. Therefore, to make the technical side the primary part of art, to make this the aim of art, caused art to temporarily lose its reason for existing. So it was that to the average man there appeared no reason for the existence of art. It apparently served no purpose, which turned the people from it.

This putting of a secondary matter in place of a primary cause has led to a terrible confusion as to what is art and what are its functions. It has enabled any pretender to call himself an artist. You will find in this country, that every person who applies a handicraft calls himself an artist, whether he is a designer of clothes, wall-paper, or furniture. The title of artist has indeed lost its flavor and become so empty, that many would prefer to be called anything but an artist. The public, accepting this empty title, passes by the real artist unrecognized. They say that there are between 20,000 to 30,000 artists in New York City alone. Anyone with intelligence, who stops to consider, will realize how impossible it is for so large a group to really be what they claim for themselves, if an artist means a person with creative ability, along the lines of painting, sculpture or music. It is time, therefore, for the public to rouse itself, and make proper discrimination.

To illustrate the absurdity to which the title of artist has sunk, an incident can be related that happened to me a few months ago. I was interested at being asked to speak on modern art to a group of artists, who stated that they wanted to learn something about the new movement. But I quickly realized that what they really desired was to be amused, and to have a new topic for a dinner conversation. I therefore decided to put them to the test as to what they really knew about art, and asked them what their object was in painting. They answered that they did not understand my question, and would I please be more explicit. As they had been introduced to me as landscape painters of reputation, I questioned them as to how they constructed

their landscape. They answered quite naïvely, that they decided on a subject, and drew what they saw before them. "But" I asked — "suppose when you are through, it does not compose well?" "Oh," one said, "I then take a pair of scissors and trim down my picture until it forms a pleasant composition."

In other words, she had not comprehended even the rudiments of art. For the first thing that an artist must know, whether he paints representative art, allegorical art, or abstract art, is how he will divide and fill the space which he has chosen to use for his work. For the art of a picture lies in this filling of space. It is the proportion of the division of space, the balance of line and color. Every line, every color put in the given space, changes the relation of every other line or color already placed. And unless one bears that in mind, and knows exactly how and why one puts down a line or color, there is no reason for making that line or placing that color. You must have balance, you must have rhythm, you must have proportion, you must know exactly what balance or proportion a line or color needs to bring out the art which you are trying to introduce into your given space.

It is this which differentiates a work of art from a picture which contains no art. Your scissors cannot replace your brains. If they do, the picture is based on untrained emotional feeling, which may have an artistic bend, but is not art. It recalls the famous story of Whistler, when asked how he had secured a certain color, with what had he mixed his paints to get the result? — and his famous, witty reply — "Brains."

One can readily see, that when a group of so-called artists decided that technique, which is the manner in which the paint or line is put on the canvas, is more important than the art one desires to express through those lines, or the balance of color, that art had indeed fallen into a sorry state. It expressed nothing — but paint. Art could not long



remain in this abyss, for through the arts, man has always sought to express those emotions which make towards development. In the primitive races, the first expression of the higher development of man is to be found in the arts. Man expressed himself by signs and symbols long before he could express himself through words. And it appears only natural to me that it should always continue so, and that in the arts we first discover the signs of a coming era, which later become apparent in science, as well as in governments, which we are at present facing through the upheaval that is now going on throughout the world.

Therefore, those of us who believe that art is the forerunner of a coming era, watched with keen interest the change which the new era brought into art.

I belong to those who believe that revolution is only an outward expression, a swinging back to the ideals which have been forgotten. The reason it appears as a revolution is that this swinging back is generally accomplished by such vigorous minds that they always introduce their own era into the ideals which they want to preserve. It is this new note which the general observer sees, which makes it appear a revolution, rather than a continuation, or the evolution of a subject. It was therefore of great interest to me, to find that this mental attitude towards revolution is to be found among the Chinese, for they too feel that through revolution the continuation of the ideals of life are brought about, and all through Chinese history one finds this interesting fact, that a loyal Chinese must start a revolution to bring back to the throne those attributes of virtue which the rulers of a dying dynasty have lost.

It is this strong desire to swing back to the true elements of art, which caused the modern revolution of our time in art—the desire to make art once more an essential element in life, weaving its influence through all the minor as well as major arts, for all the epochs which we have considered thus far show a vitality of art through their handi-



craft as well. Art in its greatest period has always entered into the very marrow of the bone of civilization, into every part of life. The people demanded that while they were going about their daily tasks, their spirits should be fed through the eye, through the beauty which existed in line and proportion in their implements of work. We see how Michelangelo was not above using his talents for the iron window-gratings of Florence, for he lived at a time when people saw and recognized art wherever expressed.

It was with the introduction of machinery in 1834 that this attitude towards art began to be lost. Machinery brought to the fore the utilitarian point of view and man's chief concern thereafter became quantity, not quality. We glibly say that machinery has revolutionized the world, without stopping to consider what we mean by that. Are we sufficiently honest to face how it has roused our greed for money? Through our greed we have let machinery control us, instead of controlling and assimilating its new aspects sufficiently to become the true masters. Until we rise above our greed for money and once more recognize the importance of art as a part of our daily life, art and its gentle influence of refining will vanish more and more from among the Western people. We complain of the brutality of the working people, forgetting that it was we who have made them brutal, when we took beauty away from them and in its place gave them ugly utensils, ugly implements with which to work. The time will come when we will recognize our blunder. Then machinery will be used to produce just as beautiful things as were made by hand in former years. Our artists will then be called upon to create the models for our machinery to copy.

All craftsmen in olden times were not artists. The chief work has always been done by the few, whose designs were copied by the many, whose fancy they pleased. The difference between former times and the present lies chiefly in the uninterrupted break which the public had in seeing the

beautiful, for through the constant seeing of the beautiful the eye was developed so that all could judge and enjoy what was good to a far greater degree than today. The farther back we go, the more strongly this community understanding for what is good in art shows itself, until we reach the primitive age, where we find the true folk-knowledge, where everyone in the community was a stone cutter or wood-carver, a weaver or decorator of utensils. Then a true audience existed to stimulate to an ever growing degree the fancy and technical perfection of the artist. With the machine came an ever growing carelessness into existence, which blinded through its ugliness. This is proven by finding more 'seeing-eyes' in those countries which have an art of the past than in those which have not, for it is a tragic mistake to think that our public museums can ever replace the influence which the daily use of beautiful implements exercises.

In countries which have no art of the past, the eye has small chance for development. It is the individual of unusual gifts, who out of his own instincts and vitality learns to see and discriminate. Therefore when we have actually conquered some of our greed, and have assimilated the use of machinery and once more conquered time, we will demand quality instead of quantity; the artist will once more be called upon to produce the original designs and forms, and having time, and knowing his machine as the artists of old knew their tools, beauty will reappear. Then our imagination will again become vivified and we will seek true beauty of line and proportion. Our eyes will once more become trained to notice them, which in turn will stimulate the artists to higher achievement.

The great service which the French artist, Marcel Duchamp, rendered through the exhibition of his so-called 'Ready-Mades,' few people understood or appreciated. In selecting a common snow-shovel out of a variety of maybe sixty different ones he had looked at, he laid emphasis

on the one good design he found. Few grasped the significance of this exhibition in New York in 1917. The average eye was too untrained to notice a difference in snow-shovels. The utilitarian process of the mind was too uppermost in connection with all working implements in the average person for them to grasp the meaning. It ended in being to them just a snow-shovel on exhibition. The public thought Duchamp mad or eccentric, as the case might be, for the average man in America does not associate art as an actual part of everyday life, which should be found in all implements, whether used in the kitchen or on the street; art for him exists only in paintings, sculpture, architecture or maybe interior decoration. Whereas in reality it should be everywhere, though the degree may vary, for art is art wherever found, which the 'seeing eye' will discover.

It is one of the tragedies of our extreme Western world, that so few people recognize art unless it is shown them. Hence the destruction in such large quantities of Eastern art by our Western civilization. It has been authoritatively stated that hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of Eastern art is yearly destroyed through ignorance in America. It comes on the market cheap and our people not knowing the art value, or that it has taken centuries to produce it, treat it lightly and destroy it ruthlessly. Unfortunately in America money value is one of the few values the people understand in connection with their possessions, and only that for which they have paid dear will they cherish, though it may in reality possess no intrinsic value.

Out of this world of disorder the modern artist of creation is trying to establish a new world of order, create new fields for the coming art to take root in. The true artist of today feels his soul stifled under the weight of a technical materialism which is always the outer expression of a material age and the death of an old art. Life must go on — and with life, art. Therefore the artist of today must give expression to the new era the world is entering upon. He feels

the dynamic force inherent in life and he must give expression to it, just as Cimabue, Duccio and Giotto had to express their love of humanity, and out of the deadness of a Byzantine Art create a new one. What this new art will lead to, no one can predict, just as no one was able to predict that a Rembrandt would evolve out of a Giotto.

It is this dynamic force inherent in life which we call the new approach towards art. We find that this new desire in art sprang into existence everywhere at once: in France, Spain, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Russia and Roumania, spreading over to England, Holland and the Scandinavian countries, and even to China and Japan, as well as to the United States.



## V

### WHAT IS MODERN ART ?

**A**S WE have seen, we are realizing more and more that we are entering a new era, and naturally those most sensitive to the coming influences must, in the very nature of things, express themselves differently from the past. Some minds are more sensitive to the vibration of a new era than others. These are the ones which give expression to the things which are to come, whether it be in art, politics or science. It is therefore a great mistake not to open our doors wide to the men who have seen the vision, and listen to what they have to say.

It is only natural that the modern artist with his inherent love of the dynamic force, with his understanding of the powers of electricity, of the brilliant metal surface of a dynamo, the beauty to be felt in an engine room with its powerful steel engines and glossy surface, has little in common with the art which tries to repeat the past. The modern artist is abundant with life and he must express life as he sees it today. That his vision is a disturbing element to others is no concern of his. His desire is not to seek fame, but to express himself. He must express himself or burn up, for the living flame is within him. And it is only the living flame which carries the torch of art the ages down. As no candle is lessened by lighting another candle, so no true art is lessened by a new art springing up. It is the continuation of art, not the destruction of art. Art is only destroyed by the imitators, never by the men of vision.

As every nation has its own inherent force which makes it different from every other nation, so this new expression

in art has its various forms which bespeak in the main the traditions of the nations from which it sprang. It is therefore very easy to understand why certain paintings are more foreign to us Americans than others. The temperaments or traditions of the painters who are expressing themselves are more foreign to our temperament and tradition. So also in this new approach towards art we find a different name and a different dress in each country where it has found a birth. The word dress is chosen deliberately to have it the more clearly borne in upon the mind that it is not the essential part of the new art. It is here where many people are led astray; they see only the outer form or dress and miss the essentials which it clothes. It is only by making this distinction that we can separate the real men from the imitators or even actual fakers, who try to delude the public into believing that the dress or outer expression is the vital issue. Once one has grasped the essentials, the distinction is simple to make between the men with the new vision and the men who have none. For when the new dress is applied to old ideas, it becomes meaningless, because the new idea is an inherent part of it. In France and Spain the men with the new vision called it Cubism, in Germany and Russia Expressionismus, in Italy Futurism, while in England it was called the Vortex Movement. We gave it the rather vague term of Modern Art in America, as all these various movements came over to us at once.

Some years ago, in a small pamphlet on Modern Art, there was written<sup>1</sup>: "The new expression in art called Modernism has grown out of the need for a change of vision. The various experiments in color and line relation are but a handmaiden to that new vision. In themselves they do not constitute art. In so far as they are matters of craftsmanship they cannot bring about a new birth of an idea. They only help to establish an angle of sight. A new vision impels

<sup>1</sup> Jennings Tofel. Introduction to an Exhibition held at the Bourgeois Gallery, 1917.

of itself new qualities of form. . . . Thus new conceptions wear their own dress. And these conceptions — not their dress — these fresh projections of the soul are Modern Art."

This power to create visions out of one's inner experience is not something of today, but belongs rather to those experiences which as yet are not universal. Herman Bahr in his stimulating book, "Expressionismus," quotes from the writings of Johannes Müller, the pupil of Goethe, the teacher of Virchow and Haeckel, as follows: ". . . 'Out of the universally formed concrete in which the universal realizes itself, something which already has found expression, can be recalled; then the imagination is reproductive. Or out of the universally formed concrete, something new, through the limitation of the universal, is conceived; then it is a productive phantasy. It is amazing to consider how many discussions have been held regarding this subject, as to whether the productive phantasy can create new simple presentations, which are not a re-grouping together of former experiences. The phantasy in the inner vision can create within its vision an image, which has never been seen and never can be seen objectively.' . . . and where else would Goethe have experienced his symbolic plants? This recalls the scene of Goethe and Schiller, when they met at Jena. They were leaving a meeting of the Society of Natural History together, when they entered into conversation. . . . 'We reached his (Schiller's) home, and the conversation enticed me in. There I spoke of the metamorphosis of plants with enthusiasm, and let a symbolic plant be created before his eyes through my pen. He saw all this with great interest, with decided comprehension, but when I stopped, he shook his head, and said — 'That is not an experience, that is an idea.' I was startled, peeved to a certain degree, for the point which separated us was brought out strongly. . . . I pulled myself together, and answered, 'It pleases me to think I have ideas without knowing it, and which I can even see with my eyes' . . ."



We must remember in passing judgment on a work of art, that our ability to understand art will carry us just as far as our own knowledge and power of observation have been developed. If our appreciation, therefore, in art is not developed beyond the point of view in art of two hundred years ago, we cannot understand, nor appreciate, nor pass judgment, on what the men of today are saying, who are trying to express the dynamic force inherent in life, and not the love of humanity.

Many have called this new expression personal caprice. If this were true, and Cubism or Futurism or Expressionism or whatever name a country wished to call the dress, had no other motive than personal caprice, we would hardly be discussing it today. Neither would it have been so viciously attacked, but like its notorious forerunner called Art Nouveau in France or Jugend Stiel in Munich and Vienna, it would have run its course more or less unmolested and then died. This, however, is not the case. Instead of dying we find it spreading and taking new forms. Besides, as has already been stated, it started its existence almost simultaneously in many countries.

We try to hide our ignorance in not understanding this Modern Art in America, by saying that we were plunged right into it, for no expression reached us until 1913, after it had been in existence for almost a decade in Europe. But in condoning our difficulty of understanding, we must not forget that neither did the works of Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh reach us, nor those of the other men who formed the bridge to this extreme modern movement in art. If, therefore, it demanded much more discrimination on our part to enable us to assimilate this deluge when it was presented to us at the Amory Exhibition in 1913, we must not forget that it was our own fault. We let forty years go by before we awoke to the fact that we were being left behind in the art world. We need only remember that Van Gogh died more than thirty years ago, and that Cézanne has



painted in the manner which has brought him recognition since the eighties; therefore we have no one but ourselves to blame for our difficulty of comprehension. It seems rather humorous to those who have followed art closely in Europe to talk of Cézanne and Van Gogh as if their art had just come into existence or to refuse to see that there has been sufficient time for further growth and development.

Before explaining the so-called extreme modernists, let us consider, while forming our judgment for criticism, a very old definition of another art, the art of poetry. Plato gave a definition of poetry which may well be extended to include painting. "Poetry," he says, "is either a simple talent, or it is a divine inspiration by means of which one clothes in the form of poetry and transmits to men, the ideas of the Gods." It is well to consider this definition carefully and to apply it as a means of criticism to the art which one enjoys. It may help to clarify our thoughts somewhat to contemplate the art of another nation who were wont to combine the poet and painter in one. I refer to China, which every one will acknowledge has a great art. In China a poet was apt to be a painter as well. In fact the art of poetry and painting was never a profession, as has been customary in the West, and this is a matter for serious consideration. A poet did not write a poem, nor a painter paint a picture, unless there was the inner urge. The creator was never hurried, he never had to produce at command; that was left for the craftsman to do. The power to express art appears to the Chinese to belong to those attributes which cannot be placed on sale, as you cannot place on sale honor and virtue. It is only the excellent craftsmanship of the craftsman which is placed on the market, which is still so highly developed in China today that anything which has been done can be copied and reproduced. Here we have the crux cleared away, and we see one of the main reasons why art in China reached such heights.

Schumann said of the musician, "that the message and duty of the competent artist, was to send light into the darkness of men's hearts." We, therefore, see that whether it was Plato of the 4th Century B.C., or the Chinese through-



Fig. 36. ARCHIPENKO. FEMME SE COIFFANT

out the ages, or Schumann of the 19th Century, that they all insisted on one thing in connection with art: that the man who sees or listens, should have his vision enlarged when he comes within the realm of art. This, therefore, is the true function of art whether of the East or of the West, and it is this we should ever bear in mind, when applying our

criticism. It is this test which was applied to those who were chosen to form the chain of art for this book and it will be applied when explaining the men who are striving to give expression to the new vision in art today.

As it is the new form of dress which clothes the modern expression of art, with which most people are concerned, instead of the spirit which it clothes, it may be as well to consider the two together. We must bear in mind that various countries clothed differently this new idea in art, the dynamic force inherent in life. But the motive power or urge of the new vision which these artists of various countries tried to express, each in their own way, is the same. It is the dress which differs, and this differentiation between the dress and vision seems difficult for the average person to grasp. An old idea dressed in a new form remains an old idea. This point is brought out clearly in some of Archipenko's statues, where he deliberately chose to interpret two well-known poses of the Greek period in the new form of substituting the concave for the convex. (**Fig. 36.**) The inherent idea being old, it is only the form which differs. As soon as the outer eye gets accustomed to this new form it wearies of the repetition of the old idea, almost as soon as if it had been expressed along more conventional lines. It is because the spirit has not received an enlarged vision, but only the material world, though care must be taken to give to this achievement its due.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore not in such figures as these that Archipenko's greatness lies, but in his other works where he expresses new thoughts in new forms. Then he combines the new spirit with the new forms, bringing to the spectator an enlarged vision completed, where the spirit and the eye together are satisfied.

It is well to consider the Cubists of France first, since no group has caused so much discussion in America as they. This is, I believe, because French art has left a deeper im-

<sup>1</sup> See Ivan Goll quoted P. 92.



press on American culture than the art of any other nation. This movement was started by Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard, in Paris, where he had gone to study art when a lad of about seventeen. In his early days he came under the influence of Toulouse Lautrec with his power of style in line. Later Cézanne, with his marvelous varieties of color within color, as well as the African Negro sculpture, which only touches the essentials, stirred him. One can trace all these influences



Fig. 37. VILLON. STILL LIFE

in his work, but he was too strong a personality to become a follower of anyone. Out of his innermost being he began to evolve an expression of art, in conjunction with his friend George Braque, which became known as Cubistic art. We see that he was not alone responsible for this new form in art, a new dress as we shall call it. These new forms of expression which clothe these new visions are generally developed from groups, rarely from one person. So we find in Paris a group of Cubists, which include besides Picasso and his friend Braque, Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleize,



Francis Picabia, Fernand Leger, Jacques Villon, Villon Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp and Jean Gris.

It is, however, by the majority that Picasso is mainly held responsible for this special form of dress in which the



Fig. 38. VILLON. IN MEMORIAM

new idea was clothed by the Cubists. The Latin temperament has always been deeply concerned with the perfected expression of form which it has emphasized. It has been their great contribution to our Western civilization and is to be found no less among this extreme modern group

than heretofore. But no group of men could long remain content with one form alone, and therefore to this form



Fig. 39. VILLON. COLOR PERSPECTIVE. SERIES OF 1920-22

others were added with time. For the cube represented only the outer dress, not the inner vision which these men were trying to express. To illustrate my point there have been

inserted three reproductions of paintings by Jacques Villon; one in his early period of cubistic forms (**Fig. 37**), the other two of a later period where the emphasis has been placed on the triangle (**Fig. 38**) and the square (**Fig. 39**). Yet it is very plain to see that the mental approach towards art is



Fig. 40. PICASSO. SPRING

the same and that it was the same hand which painted them all.

In an exquisite painting by Picasso, reproduced here, called 'Spring' (**Fig. 40**) a totally new interpretation is brought forth of the feelings which early spring awakens in the artist, whether painter, poet or musician. This same feeling Skrjabin, the Russian composer produced in one



of his short orchestral pieces, showing how closely the modern approach in art is linking the various expressions into one bond of unity. This power to render sensation, which formerly could never be rendered through the medium belonging to the painter, is one of the main achievements which the modern vision in art has accomplished and is again here shown in Picasso's 'Music' (Fig. 41). The com-

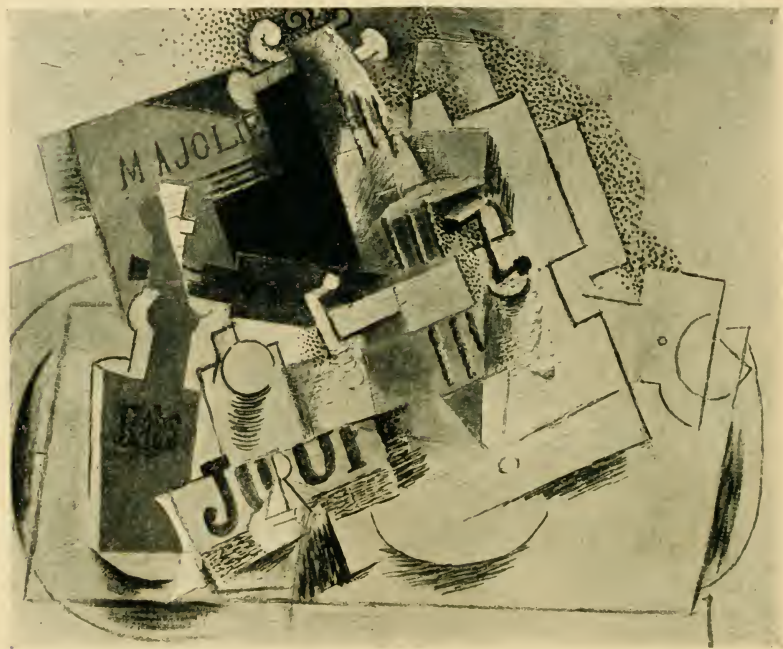


Fig. 41. PICASSO. MUSIC

prehending public who feels or sees this new vision, responds to this new approach in art, whether presented in music, painting or poetry, for it is the spirit which is abroad today.

One hears much about the Cubists renouncing their art. It will therefore come as a surprise to many people, who can see only a child's work in this modern interpretation, to discover that a number of the French artists are temporarily swinging back to realistic rendering of forms in space, as a relaxation from the intensity of work which they have followed for



years in abstract art. Those who have not come in contact with the process of such art, do not realize that the hardest mental strain is required to cull the essence out of an everyday observation. Notice Braque's two paintings as reproduced here—his 'Still Life' (Fig. 42) and his 'Music' (Fig. 43). In studying his 'Still Life' carefully one receives the reaction of being in a French restaurant of a cold, damp morning, secure from the fog, comfortably reading the paper.

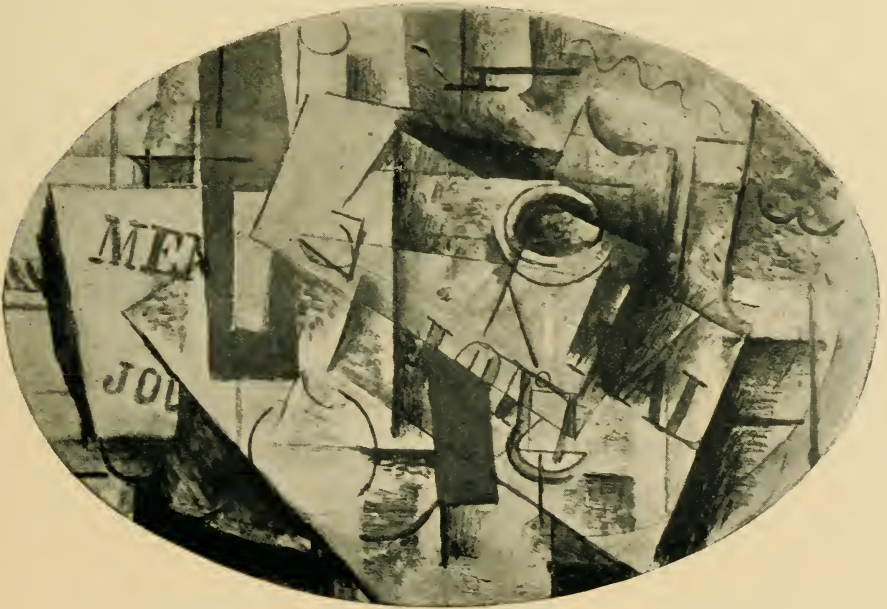


Fig. 42. BRAQUE. STILL LIFE

How banal the actual painting of the actual scene would have been, in contrast to this fine division of space, and the color harmony to which you respond with all the shivering dampness of Paris. Or take his 'Music.' One can hear the fine music of the violin—again through his division of space and the knowledge of color psychology he arouses in one the essence of that music which he heard.

There is one picture among the Moderns which has taken hold of the imagination of the American public and

that is Duchamp's 'Nude Descending the Stairs.' Though ten years have passed since it was exhibited, it is still spoken of as a picture of the moment. You find people referring to it in today's conversation, you run across it in the conversation of people in fiction, magazine stories or books. What is it which enthralls the imagination? It is the new note of action; the nude descending . . . For Marcel Duchamp has the power of catching the imagination and holding it through his titles as well. His appeal is intellectual as well as emotional. And this rare combination caught the American public unawares. They might not understand, as many did not — but whether they understood or not, they could not forget — and they had to tell their neighbors about it. Never in the history of American Art has any picture taken such hold of the common people — the gate receipts rose into the tens of thousands and the prophecy which Apollinaire, the French critic, had made years before, about Duchamp being the one to enthrall the public as Cimabue had done in Florence, in the 13th Century, when his picture was carried in triumph through the streets of Florence, came true in a modern form in New York in 1913.

André Salmon, in his article on John Storrs, speaks of the severity of the discipline of Modern Art in its constant search for absolute values, and then tells how "pure inspiration is powerless to give the right plastic expression. A certain severity is needed, which however, does not destroy the sensibility, but imposes only the respect for relation and inter-relation of values. Thus one avoids the 'fragmentary,' that more or less fortunate combination of brilliant fragments." To this I wish to draw attention and to emphasize that in abstract art the fragmentary is impossible, whether in sculpture or painting. It was only possible in realistic art through the subject blinding the average person to its existence. For art, to be art, must be complete, and the moment you renounce the realistic subjects and be-

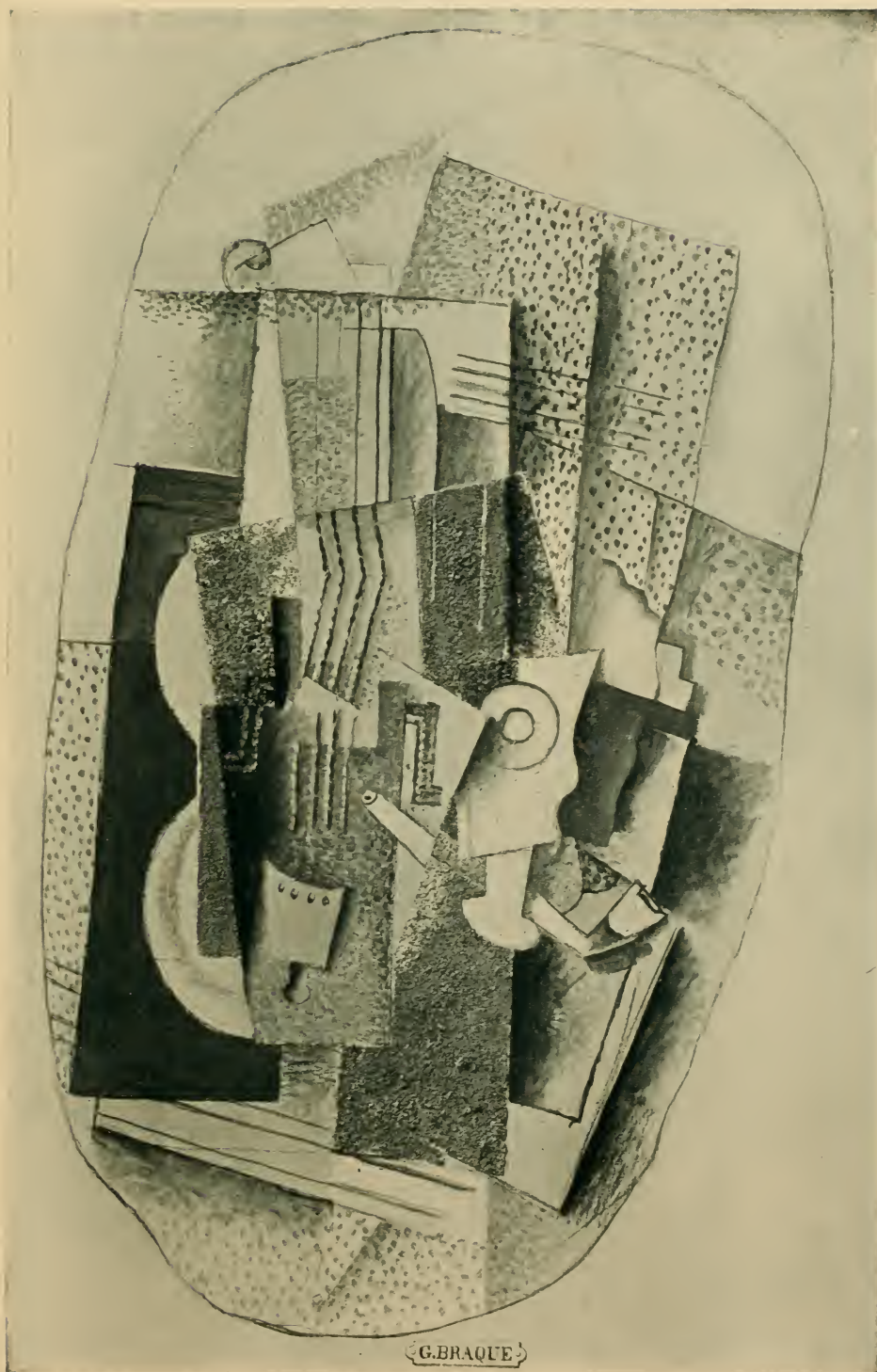


Fig. 43. BRAQUE. MUSIC



come abstract it is impossible to be fragmentary without its being recognized at once.

Jay Hambridge, in an interesting article on the "Ancestry of Cubism," which appeared in the "Century Magazine" of April 1914, states that "Cubism is an attempt to dissolve facts entirely in design." He says that this phrase is pregnant and sticks in the mind, touching many veins of thought; then continues — "After decades of painting from Salon and Academy, suave, superficial, blatant with the wearisome technical daring of the virtuoso, or smeared thick with a syrup of pretty sentiment, we are ready for nearly anything, provided it smacks of creative art. The artistic mind has for so long assiduously degraded itself to the position of an observant human camera, that only a strong reaction can restore something of its original self-respect. That reaction takes place among certain men who are so alive to our artistic degradation that they feel realism to be a disgusting and intolerable thing; they eschew it completely and take refuge in pure symbolic design. At least this ultra-idealism comports more with the dignity of creative art than ultra-materialism. It is better that an artist be poetically mad, than a slave to endless copying. Art was not born to fill the position of a clerk in the outer office of nature. But if a very meaty kernel is to be found in the basic idea of Cubism, there is much useless pulp surrounding it, and we are compelled to consider this pulp the real fruit of the movement."

He next shows that you can trace so-called cubistic art back through Dürer to Egypt, but does not mention that that which might appear to be cubistic was used for another purpose. Dürer used it for construction on which to build up his figures, whereby to get the various planes. Picasso and his group used it whereby to give complete expression to their idea. Dürer used it as a foundation which was lost in the finished picture. The modern men use it whereby to complete their pictures and their thought. Hambridge con-



cludes this article with the following paragraph: "In each individual case their work would seem to be the result of a union between an elementary geometry and those orthodox rules of composition that have been taught at Art Schools for many decades. And the forms that result from this curious union are applied, not according to any principle of organization but under the guidance of personal caprice. The cubistic criteria of designs are purely subjective. They rest less upon original, well ordered and deep foundations than upon old studio formulae, and they are built from the outworn sticks of that very realistic and superficial art the cubists profess to condemn. Cubism is at bottom not radical, but blindly, haltingly conservative."

This quotation has been given in full, because the public constantly forgets that in the world of art there are as many specialists, as in any other modern profession. We are so confused that we ask an etcher, like Paul Helleu, or a portrait painter like the late John Alexander, to paint murals, forgetting that a special training exists for each separate department in art. Because a man is a manufacturer and makes excellent steel rails, does not guarantee him to be an authority on the manufacturing of silks, nor would we demand it. Yet we call upon the doctor to pass on the mental make-up of our modern artists, delighted when they pronounce them mad, or art historians to pass on the coming of a new era, when the whole training of an art historian is to trace back. The historians are very valuable in making many things clear, but through their historic attitude of mind, they are often blocked from recognizing the seed from which the tree will grow. Their function in life is a totally different one from that of the creative artist, and it is our duty as reasonable thinking people not to confuse these two distinct functions. It is here where our personal responsibility of discrimination comes in.

Ruskin said to the artist, "Invent or perish," and these modern men with the new vision are imbued with this

feeling and realize the truth thereof. It is this quality which shows itself strongly and seems to differentiate the new movement from the past. For though there always has been a great deal of research work done in art by all workers of importance, throughout the ages, the art of the past five centuries was such a steady development of an idea, that it was rare for any but connoisseurs to see the inventiveness in the new contributions. But the modern men who are blazing the path for the new era to enter, force their research upon us with greater insistence, because their work belongs to a more definite break in the world of art.

You will notice the use of the word 'research,' to which, strange to say, few American critics have drawn the public's attention. In consequence, few Americans think of research in connection with art. Because of this, they are paralyzed when they come upon it, and do not understand. This is one of the main causes of the misunderstanding in connection with Modern Art, for the public has not realized that the greatest artists throughout history have grasped the truth of Ruskin's maxim — "Invent or perish."

It is the result of the research work, that we see in Jacque Villon's recent paintings, where he presents his problem of color perspective in flat abstract forms (**Fig. 39**), or the result of the research that we see in the Russian sculptor, Archipenko, through his sculpture paintings, or his concave figures (See **Fig. 36**) which I have already mentioned. Another example is where Archipenko and Marcel Duchamp, unknown to each other, both attacked the problem of the introduction of the third dimension within the realm of the two-dimensional art of painting: Archipenko through his sculpture-painting, and Duchamp through his panel "Tu m'" (**Fig. 44**), reproduced here. Duchamp, in this decorative panel "Tu m'," introduced his theory of the third dimension by attaching a long wire ice-box cleaner to the picture in such a manner that it became an inherent part of the composition as a whole. Its effect at night is



Fig. 44. DUCHAMP. TU M'



quite different from the part it plays during the day. At night it unites the picture with the ceiling through the shadow which it casts, and extends the realm of the painting. This was not accident, but forethought, as the picture was designed specially for the place it occupied. As completing the corner of the room for which it was composed, one must rank it high as pure decoration. The effect is to carry the spectator into space and is another expression of motion which is the keynote of his art. To the average person it represents the flight of an aeroplane. When one realizes that this has been achieved through the placement on a given space of the representation of discarded objects, as for instance a bicycle wheel, bedsprings, a corkscrew and so forth, of which the onlooker is quite unconscious, one grasps the significance of the power of mind over material objects. In this picture he renders a higher expression of the theories the Dadaists bring forth, than any expression which was brought to my attention by a Dadaist. Archipenko's conception was entirely different, as can be seen by the one reproduction given here of the 'Femme Debout' (**Fig. 45**), one of his sculpture-paintings. If it were not for the different treatment of color and abstract form, it might recall the character of low relief of "The Stations of the Cross," which one sees in Catholic Churches. It is interesting to note that the idea of the third dimension as expressed in painting was approached from both angles, that of painter and sculptor. No one can foretell where it may lead to; like Corregio's radiation of light, it may have to wait its hundred years to find its complete expression.

Archipenko attempted another great problem, which was to hurl himself in pursuit of space and to undertake to mould pure atmosphere by means of clay. As Ivan Goll, the Russian writer states, "He makes holes, miraculous mirage . . . All that we know and all that we are exists only in our imagination. Nothing has an existence. That which is concave is also convex." You will see this in the



illustration given (**Fig. 36**), where Archipenko substitutes a hole in place of the head and body of a woman. "In their non-being, the artist-creator reveals himself. Empty space surrounded by plastic shapes, outlines within a per-



Fig. 45. ARCHIPENKO. FEMME DEBOUT

sonal form, which gives us the same impression of vitality as the substance which it represents." You will see by this quotation how extraordinarily deep and profound are the study and research of these men.

Can you not see what a stimulation these inventive research studies bring to other artists? Dissatisfied with re-

peating the past — weighed down by the mental atmosphere which considers everything mad which is not conventional — discouraged by being surrounded by ‘unseeing eyes’ and people who can only associate art as a handmaiden, not as a free goddess with the right to exist for herself alone! — who never give art her freedom or the right to express herself, or cannot understand why art should want to be free; why she should not remain content to continue in the path she has always trod, which to them is so pleasing — until the creative artist rises in rebellion and says: — “Why should I give my life’s blood just to please — let me create.”

## VI

### MODERN ART CONTINUED

**A**T about the same time that the Cubists came into prominence in Paris, there appeared another group which expressed this new idea in art. These were the Simultaneists, whose leaders were Delauney, a Frenchman, and Bruce, an American. Their desire was to render motion through abstract forms of color. The reproduction given here of a painting by Bruce (**Fig. 46**) is one of a series, the motive of inspiration having been the color and movement at a fancy-dress ball. Since it is only a black and white reproduction, much, of necessity, is lost, as color in all the paintings conceived in the modern spirit forms an essential part of the whole, and cannot be separated from it. In looking therefore at a black and white reproduction of any modern painting, the beauty of line and balance may be seen, but less judgment can be formed as to the complete beauty contained in the original than heretofore. Every picture has its special place from where it radiates its true value, and the beauty contained in these paintings was brought out to their full capacity when hung in a long, narrow passage of which there are many in America. In this setting they shone and sparkled like some wonderful Eastern jewels, which those who saw remarked upon, for they had conquered a serious problem of how to free those long, narrow halls from exercising a sense of depression. These pictures must not be confused with decorative panels, as often happens, especially with us in America. A decoration must retain the character of that which it is to decorate; if a wall, it must retain the flatness of the wall, as that is the inherent part of a wall, whereas pictures must

have depth. As Walter Shirlaw, the mural painter and great American teacher of art, used to say: — 'one must be able to walk in and out of a picture without bumping one's nose.' And this is as true of modern art as it was true of the art of the past.



Fig. 46. BRUCE. FORMS

Bruce has continued his research, and has developed his abstract movements to a synthetic reality, which is monumental in its expression. It is interesting to note that Carra, one of the Italian Futurists, has done the same, though his works represent less of the monumental. This is another evidence of how astray one can go when judging only from



appearance or externals, for the dress in which these men clothe their new ideas is forever changing, as all outer forms of necessity must. In consequence many people, seeing only the outer change, think that the new movement in art is passing.

The artists of Italy, imbued with this same desire to express the new spirit in art, called themselves Futurists. They wished to represent the coming moment. Their desire was to break up the slavish mental attitude towards time. When one studies deeply into these various movements, as they have begun to express themselves in art, one is conscious of the close relation between them and the whole modern spirit of today. Take the Futurist attitude towards time and note its relation, no matter how slight to the outward mind, with Einstein's theory of Relativity. For years scientists have been working on this theory of time in connection with space, and it is not a mere coincidence that there should have arisen a group of artists at the same period who were trying to express the effect of these thoughts in their new conception of art. It all belongs to the spirit of the new era. It is the same spirit which impregnated itself upon the French and Spanish artists, who called themselves Cubists, or Bruce and Delauney, who called themselves Simultaneists; it is only the angle of vision which differs.

To overcome time, these Italian Futurists tried to express their ideas through rhythmic lines and color. The men who comprised this group were Severini, Marinetti, Boccioni, Carra, Russolo and Stella, who has since come to live in New York, which he is interpreting to us in a most powerful way. His 'Coney Island,' which was exhibited for the first time in the Amory Exhibition, is an excellent example of the best of that period of the Futurists paintings. A good reproduction is to be found in the "Century Magazine" of April 1914. His 'Brooklyn Bridge' (Fig. 47), which is reproduced here, has brought him added

recognition and fame. Those who know the bridge best, respond to this interpretation, as they have never responded before, for Stella has caught the spirit of the Bridge, that



Fig. 47. STELLA. BROOKLYN BRIDGE

silent force which calls forth the love of all who know it intimately. And again his never ceasing energy has produced further five panels called, 'New York Interpreted' where he shows how we are being ruled by the mechanical side of life, ruled by hard, cold steel, powerful cold steel girders,

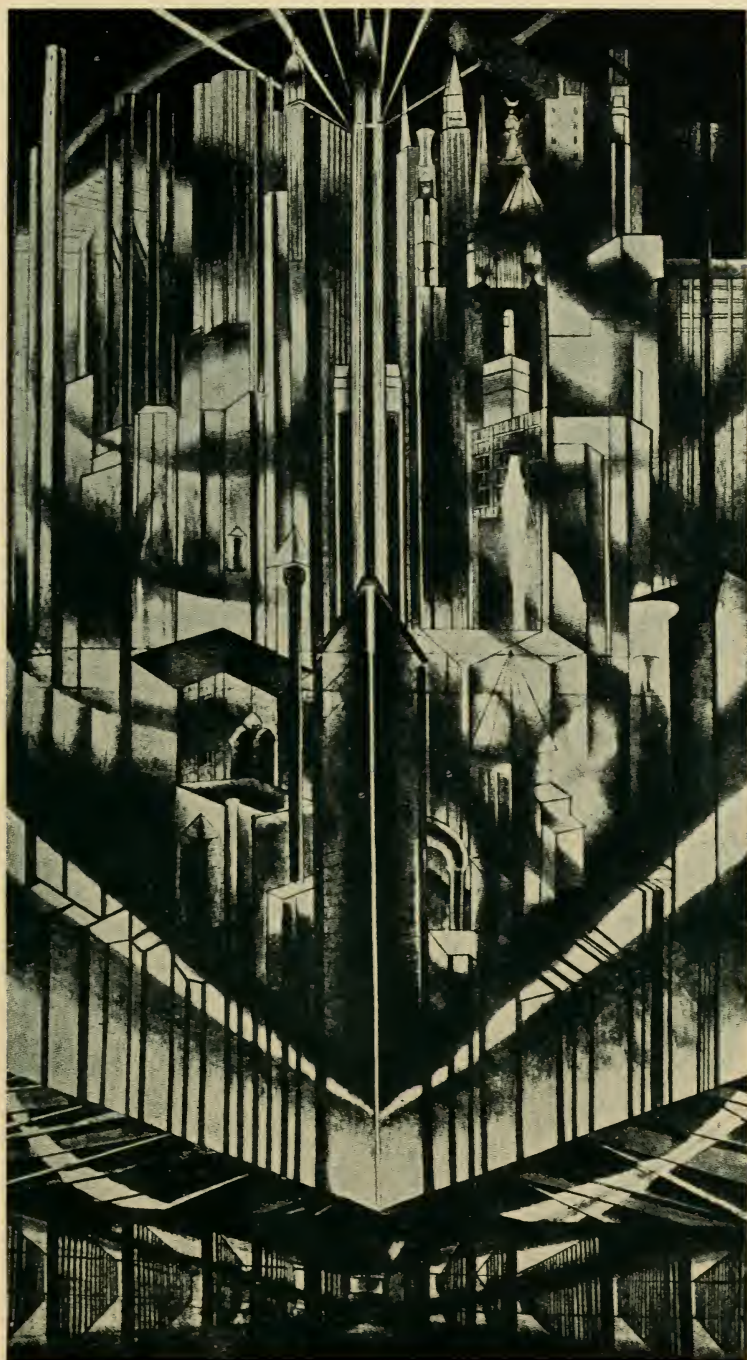


Fig. 48. STELLA. NEW YORK INTERPRETED. THE PROW



drilled, driven into rocks, and it is this very coldness which he emphasizes in 'The Prow' the centre panel of his 'New York Interpreted' (Fig. 48). He shows us in the 'Great White Way' ('Leaving the Subway' Fig. 49) the brilliancy of the flare of the electric lights, which dazzles but never warms; he brings out the hardness which underlies all this brilliancy. In this group one sees how inhuman human energy can become. It is a great work which makes all thinking people stop to consider where our much vaunted progress is leading us to.

And here we touch upon an interesting point: — the power which art may exercise in the realm of sociology — the relationship of the human individuals towards each other. For art having a refining influence on man, man cannot under the influence and stimulus of art act with the same brutality as he can without it. Art being an inherent developing force within man, true art must of necessity call into activity all the higher laws pertaining to the development of man. When an artist, therefore, out of the fullness and richness of his nature, creates one of his masterpieces, he calls into life the hidden moral forces that underlie all great creations. He himself is perfectly unconscious of what he is doing — he is obeying an inner light, and through that absolute obedience calls forth into life these great moral forces. The moment the attempt is made by the artist to consciously call this moral force into existence, it loses its power, for it receives its life through art, which gives it a distinct vitality of its own.

Many people, recognizing only this moral force, but not the art from which it receives life, do not comprehend that this special power is lost completely to the world, when not called into existence through the understanding and appreciation of art. It was this lack of comprehension towards the real function of art which made an art teacher rise at a public meeting in Washington and state that it was important to teach art in public schools, because it taught cleanliness



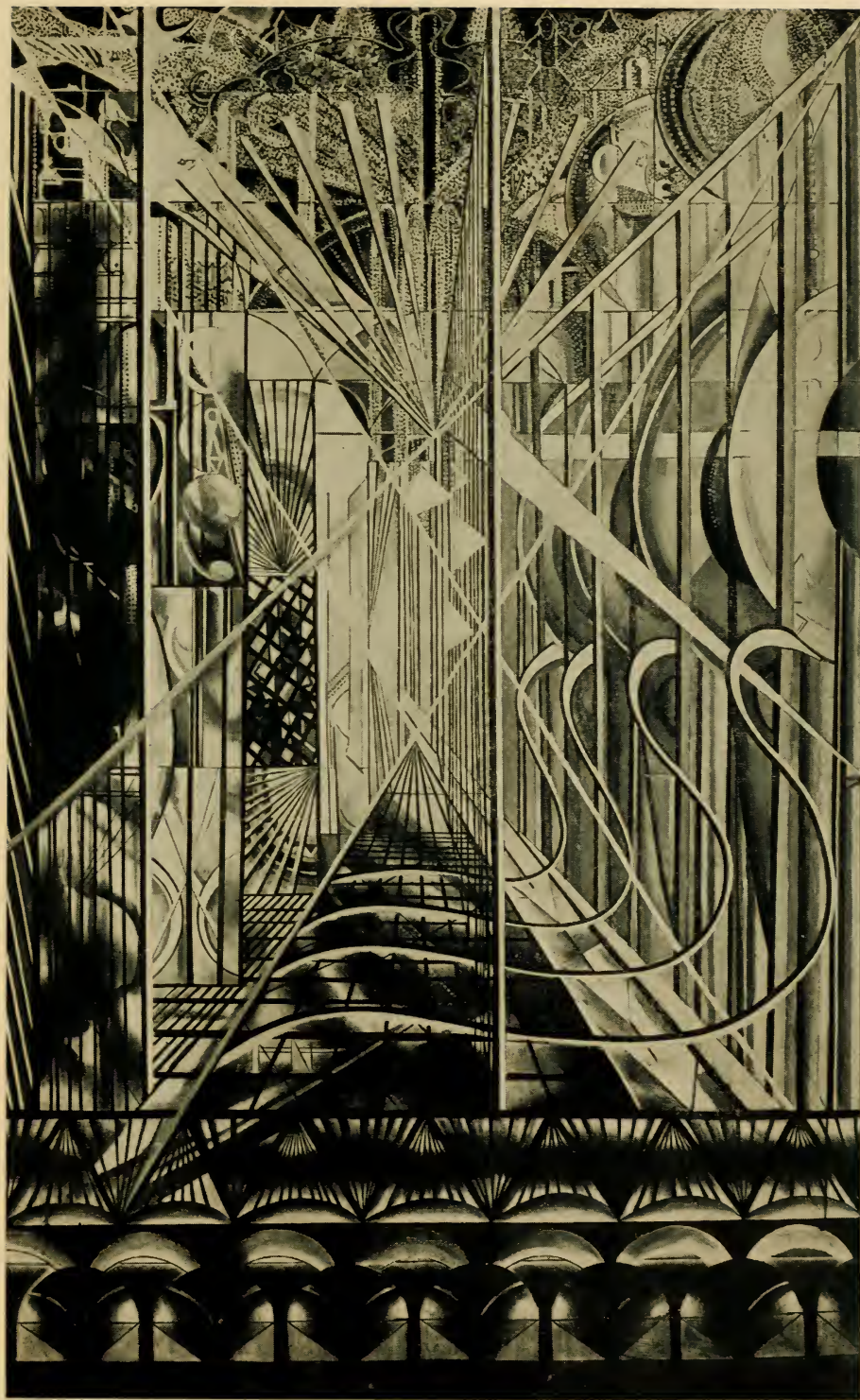


Fig. 49. STELLA. NEW YORK INTERPRETED. LEAVING THE SUBWAY, THE GREAT WHITE WAY

and orderliness. She was right in saying that art would have this unconscious refining effect upon the children, but in giving hygiene the primary place, she showed the confusion that existed not only in her mind, but more or less universally since we have robbed art of its proper place in life.

When we become universally once more conscious of the tremendous power towards right living and right thinking which art holds within itself, then we will make art as it should be, of primary importance. Art as art must exist, and be created for its own self, and through the understanding of the obedience of the true laws of balance and order, whether in color or line, there emanates from it the power for a finer relationship towards life and man.

It seemed but natural that France and Spain should have united through their love of form in their modern expression of art, and so it is hardly strange to find that Russia and Germany united through their love of philosophy, in also giving expression to this new vision in art, the dynamic force inherent in life, which existed at all times and through the eternal now, does away with our old idea of past, present and future. Kandinsky, the Russian was the leader of this movement in Munich, which called itself 'Die Blauen Reiter' and included besides Burliuk, the Russian, the German painters: Franz Marc, Heinrich Campendonk, Auguste Macke, Baroness Werefkin, Gabriel Munter, and the American Adolph Bloch. Among those invited to join in their exhibitions was the well-known painter and writer, Marsden Hartley, for their special interest lay not in a closed corporation, but in the mental approach of the artist towards his work. They cared more for the spirit and less for the form in which this spirit expressed itself. It is this which has given such an extraordinary impetus to the German-Russian movement. It has strengthened its vitality and has created a far greater variation of outer expressions than is to be found among the Cubists or



Futurists. In fact, it almost turns these other movements into school movements by contrast.

Under the leadership of Kandinsky, they evolved a most interesting theory which was called Expressionismus. It was that the function of the eye towards color would in



Fig. 50. KANDINSKY. SKETCH FOR PAINTING WITH WHITE FORM

time be developed as vividly as is the function of the ear towards music. Few of us realize how little we see and how blind we are. Kandinsky gave birth to the idea that eventually the rhythm of line and color, of color in juxtaposition to color, will be built up architecturally on principles of construction as well as music, and through this construction of color harmony there will develop a sensation

to the eye, which with time will become as important as music now is to the ear. It is amazing how many people who have open minds respond to the sensation which those pictures bring. They confuse terms and speak of those pictures as hearing them. They use the verb



Fig. 51. KANDINSKY. COMPOSITION, 1921

‘to hear’ because they do not know how else to express the sensations which they have received through the eye.

There are few pictures which have freed the mind from the fetters of convention more than Kandinsky’s beautiful ‘Painting with a White Form,’ of which the sketch for it is reproduced here (Fig. 50). Musicians as well as artists have responded to this sketch, a complete picture in itself, because of its fine balance and rhythm of lines. There is



nothing monotonous about its conception, and the more one studies it, the more one becomes conscious of its inherent beauty. In his later work a far greater clarification of vision is to be seen. Take his 'Composition' (Fig. 51) of 1921 and compare it with his sketch (Fig. 50) of 1913 and you will find how far more subtle he now is — there is no overcrowding, as occurs when out of the richness of the imagination and in the fulness of one's vitality one cannot deny oneself the joy of giving. His earlier work recalls the exuberance and richness of a Rubens composition or those splendid compositions of the Renaissance. In these later works one finds that clarity of vision, the self-restraint which is the supreme mastery. One of the great contributions which Kandinsky has made has been his use of black, as is seen in the Frontispiece, reproduced in color. No artist of the West has ever used black as he has. It is vibrant, not dead, it is the active negative of the philosophy of a Laotze.

In strong contrast to Kandinsky and yet spiritually related to him, is another member of that vital group — Heinrich Campendonk, the magic of whose color transports one into the world of imagination and unreality, in spite of the realism he introduces, and destroys the world of materialism, as is seen in the reproduction of his 'Fairy Story' (Fig. 52), or in his painting called 'Village Life' (Fig. 53). These pictures illustrate well the absolute freedom which existed among the group known as 'Die Blauen Reiter.'

If one's imagination has become petrified, one is absolutely bewildered when one first comes into contact with works of Modern Art. Many become conscious of this bewilderment when they come upon the powerful and beautiful painting of 'Der Turm der Blauen Pferde,' by Franz Marc, in the National Museum in Berlin, where they had not expected to find examples of this extreme modern work. As with all modern paintings, the more inti-

mately one knows the subject the modern artists are dealing with, the more enjoyment and pleasure one receives from their interpretation. For the modern painter is more concerned with rendering the spirit inherent in the subject,



Fig. 52. CAMPENDONK. THE FAIRY TALE

than with its outside material manifestation. In this picture, Franz Marc gives the reaction one receives when in contact with fine powerful horses. He rendered the mystery of the power of the horse, which differs from the power of man, through painting the horses blue. Those who do not know the power of horses are only conscious

of the strangeness of the color, and naïvely remark that they have never seen blue horses. They do not realize that it is the psychology of color which is represented here, as a means of expressing the deep-lying feeling of awe for



Fig. 53. CAMPENDONK. VILLAGE LIFE

an unknown quality, or for some force which has not as yet been completely fathomed.

The works of Feininger, the American, are also to be seen in the National Museum at Berlin, and many expressions of various men can always be studied at 'Der Sturm,' that energetic modern gallery in Berlin, which has breasted





Fig. 54. FUCHS. POSTER. NOVEMBER REVOLUTION, 1918



the hostile criticism from the very beginning. Its magazine, as well as its intelligently run bookshop has helped to open the eyes of the public more and more to the modern expression of all the arts. Its Wednesday evenings are especially illuminating, for then one hears modern poems read, modern music played in its gallery hung with modern paintings.

How closely Modern Art is related to the spirit of today was clearly brought forth at the time of the November Revolution of 1918, when the new power in Germany turned to the men who were expressing the art of their day, to create the posters for the revolution. All the more was this necessary as "no form of art should so reflect passing life as the poster. For the poster is a call to the people of today — not of yesterday, nor of tomorrow, but of the moment. Therefore, to arrest the passing, hurrying person, the poster must sound a call either of such discord that it holds the moving masses, or with such sympathetic vibration that it causes them to pause. The illustration given here (**Fig. 54**) of a poster in red, green and black, by Heinz Fuchs, arrests the public by its discord, then holds it by the artistic balance of the printed letters — "Do your Duty — Work."

"The German poster before the war had practically reached the last word in achievement as an advertisement for merchandise. It was beginning to be copied by other countries, as the simplicity secured was the greatest accomplishment in this form of art. The spirit of the people had changed. The poster of the revolution and the reconstruction period had to face new problems. It had to speak to the masses, not to a chosen few. Therefore, the posters of pre-war days were not the posters to which the new government could turn in order to awaken and build up a wholesome spirit.

"With the disfavor of the bourgeois classes came also the disfavor of their art. The bourgeois class in its overculture had resisted all progress of new thoughts in the arts and

philosophy, and therefore their interpreters in art could not be expected to give expression to a new political spirit. Besides, it was impossible for this art to express passion; for the art of the last half of the 19th Century in Germany was steeped in realism, and realism goes hand in hand with scepticism. No matter what subject these realists painted, whether landscapes, peasants, or working people, they painted them as subjects — from without — not, as related to themselves, from within. Therefore it was but natural



Fig. 55. DREIER. PORTRAIT OF MARCEL DUCHAMP

that the most dead posters were issued by the most conservative wing of the political parties of the new government, while the best were those of the most radical, for the radical painter was alive to the question of freedom.”<sup>1</sup>

It was the same in Russia and therefore it was but natural that that strong and vigorous mind among the painters, Kandinsky, was chosen by the Soviet Russian government to establish museums throughout all the smaller towns.

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy of *The Survey*: Article: “German Posters of the November Revolution” by Katherine S. Dreier.

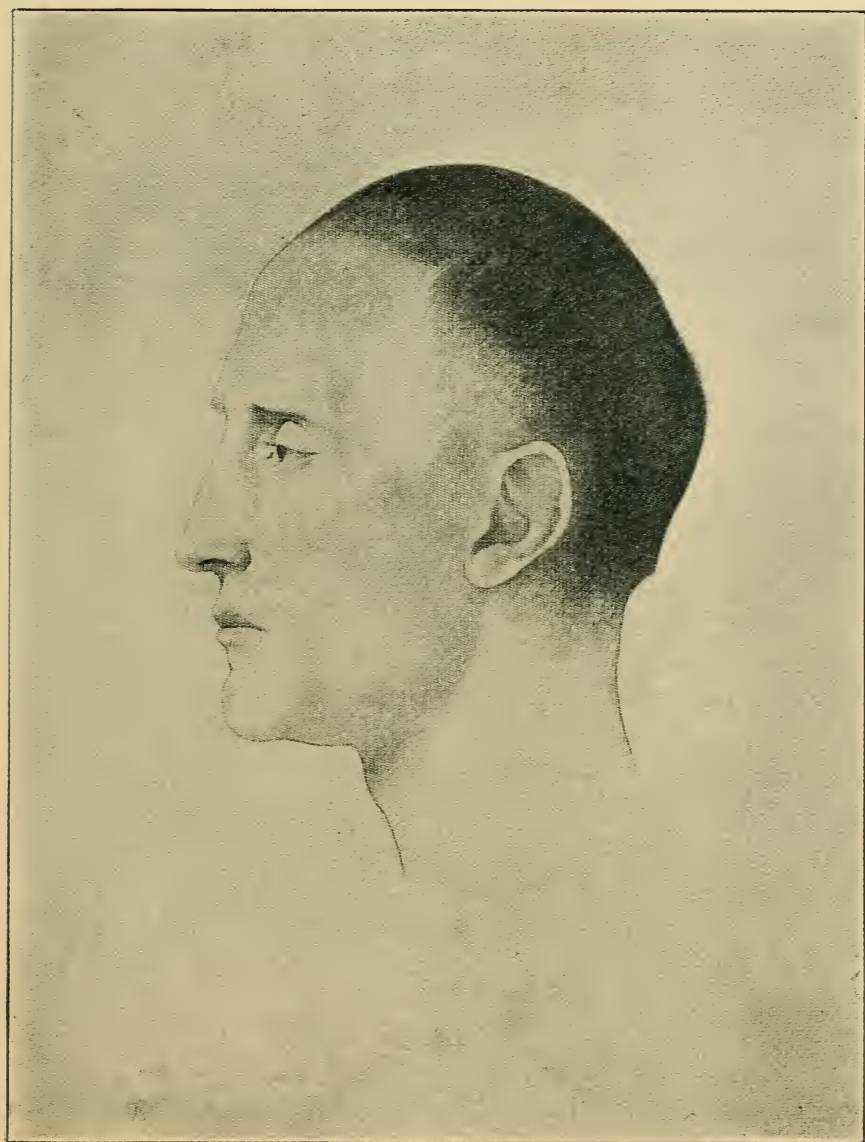


Fig. 56. STELLA. PORTRAIT OF MARCEL DUCHAMP



One of the phases which has attracted public attention especially to modern art, has been its entirely new attitude towards portraiture. Instead of painting the sitter as seen ordinarily in life, the modern artist tries to express the character as represented through abstract form and color, as is illustrated here in the Portrait of Marcel Duchamp by Katherine Dreier (**Fig. 55**). Thus through the balance of curves, angles and squares, through broken or straight lines, or harmoniously flowing ones, through color harmony or discord, through vibrant or subdued tones, cold or warm, there arises a representation of the character which suggests clearly the person in question, and brings more pleasure to those who understand, than would an ordinary portrait representing only the figure and face. For it must be remembered that in the art of portraiture only one choice could be made heretofore, by which both the artist and sitter had to abide. If the sitter was a versatile person, it was quite impossible to satisfy everyone, and the side of the character chosen generally called forth the query as to why the artist had chosen to reproduce that special trait. The new form, however, gives chance for the different sides of a character, as well as a greater range of emotion to be portrayed. Therefore it is my belief, that in time both forms of portraiture will be sought, to render a more complete representation than was possible when only the one means of expression was in existence.

To illustrate more clearly what is meant, the two portraits are reproduced here of Marcel Duchamp, one in the old style in Silver point by Joseph Stella (**Fig. 56**) and one in the new (**Fig. 55**). Those who have studied closely the two pictures together, have been amazed at the same reaction which they have received from two such totally different forms of interpretation. Several of the modern artists have expressed themselves along these lines of portraiture, each of course in his own way, but the mental approach is the same. It is, however, necessary for



the modern portrait painter to have a deeper knowledge of psychology than formerly and to make a more profound study of his subject. People have been interested to know whether it was possible to recognize such a portrait or whether one had always to be told who the person in question was. If the artist knows his subject, and has a knowledge of psychology, there is no reason to question his ability to render the character under consideration. If, however, the observer has no knowledge of the psychology of color and its symbolic representation, as to be surprised when informed that one would hardly use 'baby-pink' when wishing to represent military prowess, one cannot expect him to recognize the representation under consideration. Otherwise it appears as normal a form of representation and expression as the older method of rendering a portrait, which someone wittily called 'making a map of the physiognomy,' and we all can recall instances when such 'maps' were not recognized!

The English Vortex movement came chiefly into existence through the influence of Wyndham Lewis. They chose the name Vortex as they wished to show that they did not desire to live apart from life, as most of the artists of the 19th Century had done, but entered into the very centre of life itself, where the vortex was strongest. They express themselves in literature as well as in art, with Ezra Pound as one of their best known exponents and writers. His charming appreciation of Gaudier-Brzeska, the young talented sculptor, who was one of the leaders of this group, with Wyndham Lewis, gives one a fair idea of their aim. Unfortunately there has been little opportunity of seeing any of the original works outside of England, which makes it impossible to go into detail concerning their achievements. For one of the main differences, as we have seen, which exists between the old art and the new, is that the color of the paintings of today is an inherent part of the whole. Formerly where the subject was of equal importance with

the color, or as in the very early paintings of greater importance, one could receive a clearer impression of the art value of a painting from reproductions, especially if one knew the School to which the painting belonged, than one can today. But this is impossible with Modern Art, where the chief emphasis is placed on how color speaks to the eye.

It was only natural after the Amory Exhibition that the interest in Modern Art should grow in New York. This interest was stimulated by two of the most prominent European artists coming over to make New York their home, as they were deeply impressed by the energy and power which life in the United States unfolds; I am referring to Marcel Duchamp and Joseph Stella. But though other interesting exhibitions were arranged for from time to time, there was no concerted action taken whereby to establish a permanent society to promote the serious study of these various new expressions in art and to hold regular exhibitions in America, until the Société Anonyme, Museum of Modern Art, became incorporated under the State laws of New York, in 1920. It is an international enterprise, whereby to affiliate all those artists, all over the world, whose main interest is the continuation of art by deep research and study, by the profound desire to be true to one's own personality, and through constant study express more perfectly one's own special angle of vision, in line, balance and color. For every true artist knows that his individual value towards art lies in just this, his own angle, which differentiates him from other artists, and if he does not possess this angle, he is not the artist but the craftsman. It is this inherent weakness of not possessing an angle, which causes many so-called artists to confuse taste with art, and to follow the latest fashion of the moment. For taste can have as many fashions in art, which change with the years, as any other commodity. It is only when taste in art leaves the realms of commodity and commercialism that she becomes purified and exalted to be related to art. This confusion of empha-

sizing taste in place of art has corrupted man's appreciation of art, for it destroys the understanding of the true principles underlying art and emphasizes not what is highest and best, but what is most pleasing.

The group of Americans in America who are expressing themselves along these modern lines are: Abraham Walko-

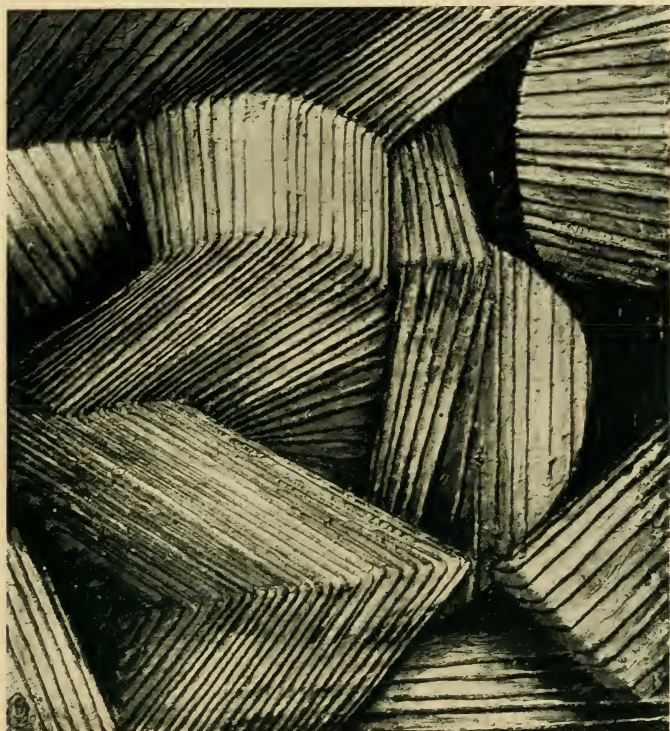


FIG. 57. COVERT. THE BRASS BAND.

witz, John Covert, A. S. Baylinson, Marsden Hartley, Max Weber, Man Ray, James Daugherty, Jay Van Everen, Henry Fitch Taylor, John Marin and Katherine Dreier. Of all the Americans, John Marin is the most complete, while John Covert is among the most gifted in his research work, as is seen in the 'Brass Band' (Fig. 57), whereas Baylinson through his strength and vigor takes an important place, which is clearly illustrated in his 'Nude' (Fig. 58).



But it is not alone the men who express themselves abstractly whose works are exhibited by the Société Anonyme, Inc., but also such artists as have remained absolutely true to their own vision in art, their own angle, and to these must be added the names of Louis Eilshemius and Dorothea Dreier. Many people wondered why the Société Anonyme,



Fig. 58. BAYLINSON. NUDE

Museum of Modern Art, exhibited the works of Louis Eilshemius. But if one will study his pictures, one will realize that he has the power of expressing that which he desires to express in a very positive manner. Most people are blind to the beauty in his work, because they cannot surmount the fetters of their own personal taste, and Eilshemius being a strong individualist is not expressing the taste in vogue, but his own angle of vision. His pictures have a subtle beauty which will speak to one, if



one will free oneself from one's own prejudices of what one terms beauty, as is shown by his painting of the 'Prodigy' (Fig. 59), an excellent example of his work. Many complain that his figures are out of proportion, but in response one need only draw attention to the fact that there are many such people in the world and if some do not like them, others appear to. It is here where one discovers how much



Fig. 59. EILSHEMIUS. THE PRODIGY

one is the slave of taste or fashion. Consider both and notice how astray one goes. Not so very long ago one thought it beautiful for a woman to have no waist. If she had one she was laced until that which was once her waist was forced to become another part of her anatomy. The Chinese do the same with the feet, which they crush until the foot becomes a stump, which they consider a sign of beauty. Today we believe we have advanced beyond such bad taste,

as we term our folly of yesterday, but we only deceive ourselves. The woman who is considered beautiful today, is slender to the point of looking consumptive. So folly spins us from one foolishness to another, which all illustrates how little art has to do with the prevailing taste or fashion of the moment.

Another group has made its appearance which should be mentioned. These are the Dadaists! They are a group who have felt that the public is so overpowered by the past, that only by clearing away the past will there be room for new growth. They are the tillers of the soil, the men who are trying to prepare the ground for future development. They express themselves through satire. The more cutting and biting their satire is, the better pleased they are. They laugh at you but they do not spare themselves. Though cynical, they do not wish only to destroy, for at bottom they are constructive.

This movement was started in Switzerland, in 1917, by Tzara, a Roumanian. In 1919 it reached Paris and was taken up by Picabia. A great following gathered and they appeared in literature and the applied arts, as well as in painting: on the stage as well as in political life. Tzara appears to remain the leader of the entire group with many able men under him as leaders of their special section or country. We saw Picabia as leader in Paris, Max Ernst and Baargeld as leaders of South Germany, whereas George Grosz and John Heartfield are leaders in Berlin. These two last Dadaists are very active in politics, which caused the break with South Germany. George Grosz, a strong vital personality, is one of the most brilliant political cartoonists of today. The Dadaists are the Bolshevists in art, distinguishing the word Bolshevism from Soviets,—in other words, the group who believe in destruction to prepare the ground for construction.

One is constantly being asked in America, what is Dadaism? One might say in response that almost any form of

our modern advertisements, which are essentially American and original, is some form of natural Dadaism in our country. As an illustration the advertisement of a young woman with attached hands, made out of paper, supposedly ironing with a real iron, is pure Dadaism. Where the Jazz

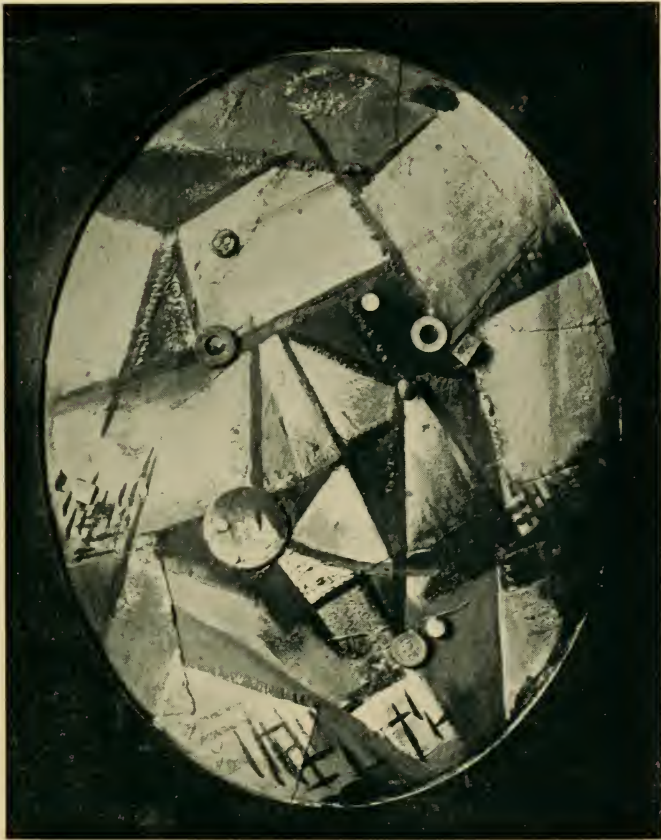


Fig. 60. SCHWITTERS. COMPOSITION

band in our country has almost obliterated music, one gets an expression of Dadaism. Charlie Chaplin through his feet, is a pure expression on the stage. We in America often appear natural-born Dadaists as regards art, without possessing the constructive side. Therefore it seems doubtful whether an intellectual Dadaism would ever secure



a foothold in America, with its intellectual constructive side as an undercurrent. This constructive side has accomplished some amazing things in opening the eyes of many to beauty, which otherwise might have passed unseen, through the Dadaist absolute freedom from personal taste, which rates everything of the same intellectual importance as regards art.

They must be considered as an influence in the modern Western art of Europe, though it appears that this influence is more to be felt as a vigorous mental stimulus, rather than as giving expression through the emotions. Only one painter besides Duchamp has expressed Dadaism through the art of painting, Kurt Schwitters, as is seen clearly even in this black and white reproduction of his picture (**Fig. 60**), and strangely enough, he rejects the appellation whereas Duchamp is counted a Cubist. As to the others, there appears a confusion of mediums, for an artist to be an artist must make no mistake in his choice of medium — he must not express as a sculptor in marble what must be expressed in stone — neither must he as a painter produce in oils what belongs to the realm of water color, or in color what belongs to black and white, or in paint or marble what belongs to literature. It is here where the Dadaists fail. They confuse their mediums and what they feel should be stated in words, since words can express it, for it does not belong to that finer realm which words have not yet reached. Those of us, however, who seek the light of inspiration which enlarges our vision; who feel that the most important and essential thing about art is to learn to discriminate between essence and form, realize that the Dadaists are of service, even if their message belongs more to the art of literature than painting.



## VII

### HOW TO APPRECIATE ART

NOW that we have considered the different phases, which have found expression in what we term Modern Art, it might be well to consider a little more closely why the average public finds that it is so difficult to understand.

For practical purposes art can be defined by two broad distinctions: First its distinction from nature, and next its distinction from science. Unfortunately the Western mind in its confusion demands of art in many instances a replica of nature. At the same time it over-emphasizes the technical or scientific side, which though it should have its place, must always be subservient to the creative. The Stoics gave a definition of art, which should once more become incorporated in the public creed of art, the definition "to create and beget." Inasmuch as men have left the idea of creation out of art, just to such a degree did they take the real function of art away from her. For art is all that we do not find outside of ourselves, but originate—the phenomena of inspiration to which we add our forethought, study and exertion. In other words, we add our industry to our creation.

We will receive a clearer understanding of why there exists such deep confusion with regard to art today, by considering various definitions which are current. Open Webster's dictionary, to which the average American will turn when looking up the word "art," and one will find that "art" is "acquired skill, dexterity, system of rules, cunning, artifice." 'Acquired skill' is the definition which is most closely connected with art as we are considering it. Yet

'acquired skill' does not carry one very far in art, for it really does not carry one beyond the stage of craftsmanship. It is because we have over-emphasized skill that we have so little real art in our country, for skill without creation leads us to stagnation.

However, let us consider another definition of more recent date, but which exercises an influence over an equally large number of people, the English Century Dictionary. Here we find a most involved definition: "The combination and modification of things to adapt them to a given end; the employment of given means to effect a purpose." This is so intellectually involved, that unless there exists a spark of creative art in the reader, he cannot hammer out its meaning and as a result it would again represent to the average mind only skill; especially if skill as synonymous with art happened to be the prevailing thought in his community. For thought is very powerful, and few people realize how few thoughts are their own, but rather community thoughts which have come to nest with them. Few minds are strong enough to close the door to foreign thoughts not their own, hence the danger of mob thoughts which sweep even over whole nations. And these prevailing traveling thoughts, which touch all sections of life constantly, are reflected throughout life, and leave their benediction or their curse, according to the truth which they reflect. So we find that the thoughts regarding skill as the essential in art, a curse. How prevalent this thought really is, is shown by coming upon it through a totally different source. In Tolstoi's very simple definition of art, "That the artist is a man who can paint and draw anything." Those who are closely connected with art know only too well that there are many "who can draw anything," yet leave not a spark of art in that which they have drawn. Therefore this too overemphasizes the craftsman's class.

This mental attitude towards art which overemphasizes the craftsmanship in art is one of the greatest tragedies of

our modern American life, for it took art from its rightful place as an inherent part of life, as a stimulus for the finer qualities, and turned it into a luxury for the few. We meet with the result of this mental attitude constantly. For even those who possess examples of great art react towards it in terms of luxury, instead of in terms of necessity. This point is brought out clearly by a story which Alfred Stieglitz, founder of "291," the first gallery to introduce the spirit of Modern Art in New York, is fond of telling.

A lady, who was a director of a Western museum, came to Mr. Stieglitz, when he had "291," to look at one of his modern exhibitions. She was greatly amused by one of the paintings, of which she asked the price. Finding that it was only thirty dollars, she said she would indulge in the pleasure of owning it. Mr. Stieglitz responded that he felt he ought not to sell the picture to anybody who regarded it merely from the standpoint of dollars and cents. Then he added —

"Suppose I were a man from God sent to you, to ask you to give up something — something that you really cared for. Tell me, would you give up one of your motor cars? You have three or four."

"No," she said, "I cannot do that because I need one for myself, my husband needs one, and the children need theirs. I cannot do with less than I have." "Well," he said, "suppose you give up one of your many servants." "No," she replied, "I cannot do that either, because I have only engaged what I actually need. It would be quite impossible." "Remember," he said, "I am a man from God, and I am asking you to give up something of all your wealth and riches to me. Suppose you give up going to the theatre for three years." "No," she said, peevishly by now, "I cannot do that either, because I am in society and that would never do. I would not know how to entertain certain of my husband's friends, if I could not take them to the theatre. Don't be so tiresome." "Very well," he said,

"you have a very remarkable collection of paintings, but maybe you cannot spare those either." "Oh, yes," she said, delightedly, "I can spare those nicely. I would give you those." "Good God!" he exclaimed, "and you are a director of a museum!"

We have been led astray by our present-day thinkers, who have placed the emphasis on the external, instead of on the essence, as Plato did. I cannot do better, therefore, than to quote in part D'Olivet's exposition on Plato's thought, in his essay, "The Essence and Form of Poetry," wherein he says — "How they delude themselves, those who habitually deceive, foolishly imagine that the lofty fame of Orpheus, Homer, Pindar, Aeschylus, or Sophocles, and the immortality they enjoy, belong only to the plan of their works, to the harmony of their verse, and to the happy use of their talent. These flattering appearances which constitute the form of their poetry would have disappeared long ago, if the intelligence which animated them had not eternalized their duration . . . But this secret intelligence does not reside, as certain other superficial critics persuade themselves, being themselves deceived, in the simple interest that the characters *mise-en-scene* inspire. True poetry does not depend upon that. It depends upon the primordial ideas which the genius of the poet in his exaltation has seized . . . I say particularly of Homer that his most just claims to immortality are less in the form than in the essence of his poetry, because a form, however admirable it may be, passes and yields to time, which destroys it. Whereas the essence of the spirit which animates it, immutable as the divinity from which it emanates, by inspiration resists all vicissitudes, and seems to increase in vigor."<sup>1</sup>

To learn how to discriminate between essence and form, is therefore the most important function of the spectator when

<sup>1</sup> D'Olivet's Introductory Essay to "The Golden Verse of Pythagoras." Trans. by Nayán Louise Redfield.



looking at a picture or in considering any expression of art. This test can be made only by applying one's entire being of soul and mind. Many present-day psychologists have defined the mind as a function of the brain, which is a physical instrument of our material body; whereas the soul's realm is the psychic realm, not the material realm, and is the body or vehicle of feeling. Art cannot exist without feeling, for art is an expression through the senses. Therefore those who do not recognize this but try to appreciate art through the mind alone are quickly led astray, for if feeling is left out of either the production of a work of art or in studying a work of art, the essence is lost and the response is only to the outer shell, which is forever changing and passing. It was because man had to give expression to an inner need which at first could be expressed only through feeling that the arts came into being. And this fact should be reiterated again and again until it sinks deep into our consciousness. Art therefore is chiefly an expression of the soul, through which it must speak through feeling. The present-day psychologists who have given this interpretation to the soul show how the soul draws its experiences from the upper spiritual force as well as from the lower material force, leaving us individuals to choose the force which shall feed us. When a rebellion of the soul sets in, as is happening today in art, where skill has been overemphasized, it is generally caused by a congestion of the lower material force. In its rebellion against this congestion, the soul strives to free itself, to make room for a greater spiritual growth. This expresses itself in some form or other, which the world, being material, terms rebellious. If the spiritual side is ignored in any way, we get a weak sentimentality or a debased sensuality in our expression, which is not art.

If we now recognize this spiritual quality in the test we must apply to pictures we will seek for the light of inspiration, the enlarging of our vision. We will realize that a picture which has no message of an enlarged vision, which

gives no spiritual stimulation, whether painted realistically or abstractly, may contain excellent workmanship, but is not art. In recognizing this we will recognize the essentiality of art. We will recognize that art is an expression of the spiritual life of a community and to become truly a spiritual expression, art and life must become interchangeable terms. Then we will feel the tragedy of this divorce which exists today between art and life and realize more fully that we can never rise to be a great people until we bring art back as an inherent part of life.

This can only be done through clearer thinking. And the only way to learn how to think clearly is to have the courage to face our own ignorance and through discrimination find out exactly where we ourselves stand as to our vision in art. What is our receptive channel of appreciation of art? Do we discriminate in our emotions? Do we separate in our minds, when looking at a picture, what arrests our attention? Is it the art in the picture?

Few people recognize their own limitation when looking at art. That is why they turn to dexterity. It takes comparatively little training of the eye to recognize dexterity, and the more superficial and dexterous a painter is, the easier it is to recognize his style, which always flatters, through giving a sense of knowledge, which, alas, is but an illusion and a snare! Another falsity is the public's idea of perspective and proportion. Many people cannot appreciate Chinese art because it has not the Western world's arbitrary idea of perspective. As to proportion, few realize that the charm of life lies in the variety of proportion. But because an arbitrary proportion and perspective are easier to grasp, the public has seized upon them whereby to measure an artist's ability and knowledge, not realizing that it has nothing whatsoever to do with art, but lies entirely outside its realm. To illustrate the point in question, since the days of aeroplaning, more people comprehend Chinese perspective!

It takes true training of the eye to learn to observe and to feel. It is a great mistake to think that one who sees has the power of observation which is closely bound together with the sense of feeling. Those who stand before a picture and know the subject well, will be able to tell whether the artist saw merely that which he tried to paint, or whether he truly observed his subject. One can best illustrate a point by relating an incident pertaining to it, and this point was clearly brought out by two sailors looking at a big canvas of the ocean which hangs in the Contemporary Art section of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. "Gee," said the first, "is that meant to be the ocean? I never saw it look like that!" A nearby spectator interested in the remark asked why he could not see the beauty in that painting. Nothing daunted, the sailor replied, "Because there ain't no motion in them waves, and when a sea is high like that, gee, but you get the motion!" That sailor was right and gave a true criticism. Knowing the ocean through observation, he knew the ocean and felt it. The picture did not respond to any feeling, because the artist had painted arrested motion, and arrested motion leaves one cold, no matter how dexterously it is done.

This incident brings out another important point, which is that many people spoil their power of observation in connection with art, through a lack of unity in looking at art. The average student of art while looking at a painting becomes so engrossed with the technical side, that if the picture is dexterously executed he will be carried away by it, instead of considering whether the artist caught the spirit as well. This is especially true if the picture is painted in the latest technical fashion in vogue for the moment, which also explains why many of our museums are littered with an art of no permanent value. If the student or buyer of art would apply his entire self, mind and soul, in looking at a work of art, he would soon learn to discriminate. It is because we glorified dexterity to such dizzy heights, that



the excellency of dexterity blinds so many from seeing that the picture contains little else.

This glorification of dexterity has caused one of the greatest difficulties which the average art student faces. It is, that art is rarely taught in any of the art schools today. What is taught, is the technical dexterity of the master or teacher in charge. He rarely teaches the principles of art or that the only contribution of an artist towards art is clear thinking, besides keeping the body of feeling pure and untouched by commercialism. It were better to spend one's time studying the principles of art from the old masters by copying them in the museums and by learning the technical side of paint through chemistry than to learn how to paint in the manner of a second rate art teacher at one of our art schools. Through association with the real masters in art, the student will learn to think clearly enough to recognize his own limitation and whether he belongs to the artists who have a real message to give or to the craftsmen. Most so-called artists have only enough talent to re-interpret art, and these were always considered craftsmen in China. It would clarify the atmosphere and create a far more wholesome condition, if we did the same; and we will when art once more takes its rightful place in the community. Then the craftsman will receive the respect which today seems denied him and will seek his proper training. For now the average artist must try to live up to a reputation which, being based on nothing, ends by dragging him down to nothing. Life is full of such tragedies. Men of promise who began by doing good, honest work, end by doing that of which they would have been ashamed, in the vigor and honesty of their youth, before the sentimental attitude of an ignorant public exalted them to the dizzy heights which caused them to fall so low. If they had always been accorded their true valuation, they would have always given of their best, whereas now, even within their own lifetime, they see the fickle public destroy that which but a few years earlier was exalted.



In putting dexterity in its proper place, we do not do away with dexterity, but we realize that it is an outer expression, an outer shell, which has little to do with the reality of art. It is the means or vehicle of giving clearer expression to the feeling the artist desires to express. Inasmuch as it aids expression, it is of value, but when it becomes an end in itself, as is constantly occurring today, it ends by being nothing: and being nothing, it vanishes with time.

But the confusion which exists with the public in connection with art does not end when the public has first realized that art is not a replica of nature or that technique is of secondary importance. It must also learn to discriminate between the various emotions which come into play when looking at art, as well as to know to what extent its power of actual sight is developed. In looking at pictures, therefore, and in desiring to find out for ourselves where an artist stands, we must first know where we ourselves stand as to actual sight. For having eyes unfortunately does not mean a power of vision. We think that because we use our eyes in daily contact with life, in crossing the crowded streets of our cities, in reading books and newspapers, in glancing at illustrations, that we see. But it is amazing how little we see above and beyond what we actually need for use in daily life. You can prove this through a test which you can give yourself, to ascertain how much you really do see. It is the simple test to discover your own power of visualization, which is one of the three memories which we possess. Some people have the simple mechanical memory developed best, which can retain any word or number which the eye has once seen. Others have the literary memory most developed. They will recall a picture or a place because of the anecdote associated with it in their minds, whereas those with a visual memory will be able to picture what they have seen. It is this memory which makes people say that they cannot tell exactly where a certain

house is, but they can describe it. For art, therefore, the only memory of any value is the visual memory, for it is only by training the visual memory that the seeing eye can be developed. Few realize the law which connects the outer seeing eye with the mind's eye, which controls it, and which is the important eye. It is the mind's eye which can visualize things and recall the picture seen. If this mind's eye is trained, anything seen can be drawn, for the mind controls both the eye and the hand. But one must not confuse this power of visualization with art, as Tolstoi did, for the two are not interchangeable terms.

Therefore the test to apply, whereby to gauge one's power of visualization, which is done through observation which includes attention, is to look at some object for from ten to fifteen minutes, and then turning one's back on it, draw it. If you have seen or observed it, you can draw it. If you have not been able to concentrate your attention on it for that length of time, you cannot draw it, no matter how trained your hand appears to be when drawing direct from a given object. The visual memory of the Chinese is so trained that an artist can copy almost any design or picture, after studying it for a comparatively short period of time. Therefore no notes may be made in the Museum in Peking and this rule is strictly enforced, for with a few notes the copy would be so exact that it might be substituted for the original. When the mental eye is untrained it cannot report to the mind, which in turn directs the hand. Even if the hand is untrained, it can draw what the mind's eye has clearly grasped. If you apply your mechanical memory or your literary memory to aid your visual memory you will find in the end that it will weaken and retard you. This visual training is a very important part of an art training, yet how many art-schools conduct such classes? Even for the average public it is important to develop this power of observation, for how else will it be able to discriminate, in matters pertaining to art, if it cannot fix its attention?

It is this lack of power in attention, which the average person is quite unconscious of. Watch the public in an art gallery, and note how many minutes they deem necessary in which to look at a picture. They will enter a gallery, walk around once, and then leave. Yet they feel themselves quite competent to pass judgment on an exhibition containing from twenty to thirty paintings. Others will sit down and read the criticisms, letting their judgment be formed for them. But whether they stay five minutes or whether they linger to read, neither receives the message of art through the eye. In contrast to the Anglo-Saxon the average Continental depends upon his sight to stimulate his emotion, for he knows that he can receive these messages only through the eye, and not through any of his other faculties. Yet the average American, unconscious of this whole marvelous world which can only penetrate the brain and the soul through the eye, will discard in a moment what has taken the artist a lifetime to create. Herein lies the tragedy, for as has already been stated, he feels himself competent to judge. Should, however, the picture recall some pleasant memory, he will linger and dilate on the greatness of the painting, once more quite oblivious of the fact that it has nothing to do with art.

It was these various other emotions which came into play in connection with art and which were absolutely unrelated to art, which made the artists of the immediate past create the slogan "Art for Art's sake." They were disgusted to have a picture admired because of the price it brought, or because it was an excellent likeness of the Duchess of Whatishername or maybe Aunt Sue, because it represented a historical battle or the Coronation of Napoleon. They were right when they claimed that a picture of an onion could contain more art. They were wrong in condemning all historical and religious pictures of the past. Tintoretto's pictures will always be greater art than the still-lifes painted by the Dutch School, whereas Van Gogh's



'Kitchen Chair' will always be greater than either the 'Coronation of Napoleon' or 'Washington Crossing the Delaware.' The subject has nothing to do with art, as we saw in Rembrandt's 'Woman Paring Her Nails,' but it may become an extension in art, which may be an inherent part of art, as we find in Tintoretto's pictures. It is the subject, however, which confuses so many of the Anglo-Saxon people, whose chief reaction is always through the mind instead of through the senses, as all reactions in art should be.

In conclusion we must find out where we ourselves stand as to our own knowledge of art. If one has not gone beyond the steps of a story-telling picture one must in all sincerity recognize one's own limitation, instead of trying to drag others down to one's level. The only chance of learning is to acknowledge one's own lack of knowledge, not by pretending that one likes or dislikes a picture one does not comprehend. The most successful way is to follow in the footsteps of a man, a former well-known American connoisseur, who was wise enough to buy only the pictures he personally liked. He made his own collection. Being of simple origin he began by liking the story-telling pictures best, until one day there dawned on him the consciousness that he received more pleasure in reading the stories. He loved his pictures and would sit and look at them by the hour. Then the day came when he realized that the art of painting was not interchangeable with literature but must contain that which can be received only through the eye. In consequence he came to be a leader in recognizing art.

It was his great love for art which developed his power of observation and being honest he always stood up to his own measure. It is only according to our own measure that we can judge. We must therefore remember that we cannot judge that which we cannot comprehend. If our stage of development has reached only the story-telling picture we cannot pass judgment on a picture which appeals only to the comprehension and understanding of art. If our develop-



ment has reached only an appreciation of the Renaissance, then we cannot comprehend what the best men of the 19th and 20th Centuries are saying. If we wish to understand the art of all ages, we must apply the test of art, which is: that the technical construction of a painting is built upon the division of a given space in line, form and color; the given space to be considered as a whole, with each section subservient to the whole, without emptiness and voidness to be found in any one part. This is the foundation of painting, quite regardless of whether it is abstract or realistic, and it is here where so many skillful painters fail. They leave whole sections of their canvas just loosely joined together by paint with no inherent cause for connection.

Art in America would have a far greater chance for development if we had more people who honestly bought what appealed to them personally, for then with time their judgment would be trained. Few realize the present condition under which art exists in our country, because of the fear of buying the wrong thing. Therefore even the dealers with a vision are unable to handle men who have left the beaten track, for they have no public to support them. The average person in America, because of his fear of buying the wrong picture, rarely purchases art because he hopes to find inherent beauty or a message of spiritual value, or even because he likes it personally, but because it is a picture much talked of, or evokes the jealousy of neighbors in possessing so rare a painting. Or else if he does buy to please himself, it is because of a narcotic influence, of which he is quite unconscious, for he dislikes any disturbing element, which the unknown always brings. For the pleasant picture lulls the owner to day dreams as an open fire would, evoking reminiscences and playing with the memory, which awakens agreeable sensations. Like any other narcotic, they draw one away from actual life. If one seeks the equivalent of narcotics in art, one naturally turns away from modern art as too vital and stimulating with its message of the future.

Few people realize how many other emotions come into play in connection with their supposed interest and love of art.

Every intelligent person can see the stagnation which would set in, if all the new thoughts in connection with medicine which had not stood the test of forty years were not permitted to be discussed at medical congresses. This is very evident, yet few people realize that these are the very conditions which regulate most of the art exhibitions in New York today, and for that matter the country over, and which content the people.

Alas, the trouble is with the average person today, that he does not wish to think! He is so taken up with the activities of life that he either has no desire or time to think. One need only consider the movie, which in many cases is supplanting the desire for reading in the home. It is much less effort to get the gist of a story condensed at a movie through the eye, besides being more social, than to sit at home alone and read. People have not realized that they were swinging back to a modern form of the wandering minstrel who went from village to village in the olden days to tell his stories. One of the many mistakes made in reconstructing the past is the cause of existence we have given to certain manifestations. It was claimed that the wandering minstrel was popular because few could read. But the movie has proven that it was the sociability inherent in human nature, as well as the innate desire to do the easiest thing, which gave an important place in the past to the wandering minstrel, as it is giving an important place to the movie today.

It is most interesting that two such totally different new expressions in the world of art should have arisen at one and the same time, as so-called Modern Art and the introduction of the movie. The movie, which demands the lowest amount of intelligence to follow and enjoy — and Modern Art, the new expression of dynamic force and simplified forms, which demands the highest form of intelligence and thought.

There is a spiritual law which refuses to give unless it receives, and it has always appeared to me that Modern Art demanded its full toll. It leaves it to the spectator to draw out of his own depths of knowledge and wisdom — it acts as a stimulation to free the inspiration — but as the sphinx of old, its message is silent except to those who have eyes to see. It is this which arouses so many people's anger. It is this anger which causes so much confusion.

Having cleared away many of the unrecognized obstacles which blocked us from appreciating Modern Art, let us approach it with an open mind, and applying the measures which we have learnt must be applied to the old form as well as the new, look to see whether our vision is being enlarged by that which we see. We will then realize, if we have eyes to see, that if a picture has no message of an enlarged vision, gives no spiritual stimulation, whether along constructive lines or in breaking through that which has encrusted art, it may be an excellent piece of workmanship, but does not belong to creative art. In recognizing this we will recognize the essentiality of art — that art is always in the making. We will then no longer place it among the luxuries, but among our needs, and respond to its far-reaching and vivifying influence over the spirit. In doing this we cannot close the door and say that art died with the 17th Century. Art cannot die, for man cannot stop creating. Each era has its message for the 'seeing eye.' It is for us to recognize this so that the art of our era may be seen and understood.

It is the essentiality in the new art which has given such extraordinary vitality to all these new movements, and is the cause of its ever increasing growth and influence. People turn to it for inspiration, for it holds the kernel of life hidden within and they feel its vitality.

I hope the time may come, in fact will soon be at hand, when we too in America will respond to the new era in art and by our response, out of the vast resources of our coun-



try and the idealism of our people, will present its beauty in new forms. Our physical needs have called for a response from our engineers which places them among the leaders in the engineering world. Give our artist the freedom to express the extraordinary beauty that lies hidden in our physical need for covering distances. Let him express in new forms the rush of the aeroplane through space; or the swift speeding forty-horse power car; the extraordinary skyscrapers as they crowd upon each other; the belching of soft coal from our factories and river boats; the gas tanks; the marvelous revolving electrical signs! They must be expressed. They have another message besides the material one. They cannot be expressed in the old forms, and yet they should be expressed in terms of paint. They are the vital expression of today, as vital an expression of our times as the great Gothic Cathedrals of Europe were an expression of their times. If they express a poverty of soul let the artist expose it. If they express an inherent force to which the people respond today, as unknown a force as touched the imagination that built the great Cathedrals, let the artists reveal it. Free the artist from the trammels of the past. Demand that he express the spirit of the people of today, their love of power and speed, the spirit of freedom as well as the spirit of slavery. The desire to cover distances, as expressed through electricity and the wireless vibration of the air. Let him express the new, not the old. Let him reveal that this love of conquering distances may mean a coming together of all the peoples of the world, a greater brotherhood of man or greater slavery — which? Demand that our time be expressed. And if you, as the people, demand it, the artist will respond. Then a new art representing a new era will be born in America that day.



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# WHAT ARE THESE MODERNS DRIVING AT?

WHAT are the modern painters driving at? How many of you have asked yourselves this question? What possible reason can there be for this strange handling of unfamiliar forms, this apparent distortion of life, these attempts to carry painting into a third — and even a fourth — dimension? Cezanne, Picasso, Renoir, Puvis de Chauvannes, Augustus John — these men are admittedly great painters; but how is the layman to appreciate their efforts without a special knowledge of background and motivating impulses?

IN WESTERN ART AND THE NEW ERA, Katherine S. Dreier offers a real comprehension of modern art to the layman and amateur. Her opening sentences are perhaps more explanatory of the work than any description:

“To have a comprehension of art and its meaning, to understand the various phases of art as they appear to us today, one must have some knowledge of how art came into existence. This can only be accomplished through the study of the art of primitive races, whence one can trace the fundamental reason for the existence of art, can reach the source of inspiration, and push aside all those accessories which have accumulated like barnacles throughout the ages, until they have made secondary matters of supreme importance. Only by comprehending the fundamental existence of life, can man conquer the illusionary caprice which life outwardly shows.”

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